AL-MIZAN

AN EXEGESIS OF THE QUR'AN

BY: ALLAMAH AS-SAYYID
MUHAMMAD HUSAYN AT-TABATABA'I

VOLUME 1

بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

Al–Mizan: An Exegesis of the Qur'an

:Writer

Muhammad Husayn Tabatabai

:Published in print

World Organization for Islamic services

:Digital Publisher

Ghaemiyeh center of computerized researches

Contents

Al–Mizan: An Exegesis of the Qur'an

BOOK ID

Author(s): Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn at-Tabataba and ۰۳۹;i

Translator(s): Allamah Sayyid Sa and ۰۳۹;eed Akhtar Rizvi

(Publisher(s): World Organization for Islamic Services (WOFIS

Category: Qur’an Commentaries

Topic Tags: Exegesis Tafsir

Person Tags: Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn at-Tabatabai

ISBN: ج.۹۷۸:۱۳-۹۶۴-۶۵۲۱-۴۶-۹ ؛ دوره ۹۶۴-۶۵۲۱-۱۳-۵ :

Congress Classification: BP۹۸/ط۲۵م ۹۰۴۹۵۲ ۱۳۹۴

Dewey Classification: ۲۹۷/۱۷۲۶

National bibliography numbers: ۳۸۲۱۵۷۸

عنـوان و نـام پدیـدآور : Al-Mizan : an exegesis of the Qur'an/ Muhammad Husayn at-Tabataba'i; Translated by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi.

وضعیت ویراست : 1st ed.

مشخصات نشر : ۱۳ =۱۹ Tehran: World Organization for Islamic Services, -

مشخصات ظاهری : ج.

وضعیت فهرست نویسی : در انتظار فهرستنویسی (اطلاعات ثبت)

یادداشت : فهرست نویسی بر اساس جلد پنجم، ۱۳۶۲=۱۹۸۳.

شماره کتابشناسی ملی : ۴۰۱۸۶۸۷

Volume ١

point

From Suratul Fatiha (١) to Suratul Baqarah (٢), verse ٩٣The first volume of the renown commentary on the Qur'an written by one of the greatest commentators on the Qur'an in modern times. This volume contains the exegesis of Suratul Fatiha (١) and .Suratul Baqarah (٢) to verse ٩٣. Translated by Allamah Sayyid Sa'eed Akhtar Rizvi

Foreword

The late Islamic scholar, thinker and philosopher, al-`Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn at-Tabataba'i (al-`Allamah at-Tabataba'i) came from the celebrated Tabataba'i family of Tabriz. For the last three centuries, this family has produced generation after generation of renowned religious scholars in Azarbayjan (Iran). They are descendants of the second Imam, al-Hasan ibn `Ali (peace be on both of them). .The clan is also referred to with the title, al-Qadi

Al-`Allamah at-Tabataba'i was the son of as-Sayyid Muhammad ibn as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn at-Tabataba'i. al-`Allamah was born in Tabriz on ٣٠/ ١٢/ ١٣٢١ A. H. (١٧/٣/ ١٩٠۴ C. E.) . His father died in ١٣٣٠ (١٩١٢). The orphaned child grew up in Tabriz, and after completing the religious education there, in circa ١٣۴١ (١٩٢٣) he went to an-Najaf .al-Ashraf (Iraq), the most important centre of the highest Shi'ah religious learning

In an-Najaf al-Ashraf, he began his higher studies with such illustrious scholars as ash-Shaykh (al-Mirza) Muhammad Husayn (son of Shaykhu 'l-Islam al-Mirza `Abdu ('r-Rahim

Na'ini al-Gharawi (۱۲۷۷/۱۸۶۰-۱ - ۱۳۵۵/۱۹۳۶) and ash-Shaykh Muhammad Husayn (son of al-Hajj Muhammad Hasan, Mu'inu 't-Tujjar) Isfahani (۱۲۹۶/۱۸۷۸ - ۱۳۶۱/۱۹۴۲).

These two, together with ash-Shaykh Diya'u 'd-Din (son of Mawla Muhammad) `Iraqi (۱۲۷۸/ ۱۸۶۱-۲ - ۱۳۶۱ / ۱۹۴۲) are held in the highest regard in the Shi `ah world. They were among the most prominent scholars not only in the fields of the Shiite jurisprudence and the fundamentals of jurisprudence, but in all Islamic subjects. The opinions they expounded and the theories they established have been followed by all those who came after them.

Each of them founded his own school of thought. They trained thousands of Shi `ah scholars and jurists; and all the maraji `u 't-taqlid of the Shi`ite world, to this day, are their students. The Isfahani was a philosopher, unsurpassed in his time, a man of literature and a good poet of Arabic and Persian; he was a genius whose achievements made others to look upon him as their ideal. The Na'ini has carved for himself a niche in the history because of his bold opinions and decrees in the political and social life of the Muslim ummah.

al-`Allamah at Tabataba'i was much influenced by these two teachers, (and especially by the Isfahani) in the development of his thoughts and knowledge. A third influence was of as-Sayyid Abu 'l-Qasim Ja'far (son of as-Sayyid Muhammad al-Musawi) Khwansari (۱۳۱۳/۱۸۹۵-۶ - ۱۳۸۰/۱۹۶۱), known as "the mathematician." al-`Allamah at-Tabataba'i was proud of learning the mathematics from him.

Also, he wrote a book on some

topics of higher mathematics, applying therein some special theories of his teacher. The book is mentioned in adh-Dhari `ah, vol, ii, pp. ۲۳۲ - ۲۳۳. He learned philosophy and metaphysics from as-Sayyid Husayn (s/o as-Sayyid Rida s/o as-Sayyid Musa-) al-Husayni (۱۲۹۳/۱۸۷۶ - ۱۳۵۸/۱۹۳۹) of al-Badkubil a well-known teacher of philosophy and .related subjects in those days

In ethical and spiritual field, he received his training from his relatives, as-Sayyid (al-Mirza) `Ali Agha (s/o al-Mirza Husayn al-Qadi) Tabataba'i (۱۲۸۵/۱۸۶۹ - ۱۳۶۶/۱۹۴۷), a well-known divine who established a school of spiritual and ethical training which is .flourishing to this day

All those influences combined in al-`Allamah at-Tabataba'i to create in him a well-balanced academic and spiritual personality. A well-respected authority on religious subjects of jurisprudence and its fundamentals; a philosopher of independent views and various new theories; an inspired model of ethical and spiritual perfection, who not only taught morality but lived it - this was al-`Allamah at-Tabataba'i. Yet it will be correct to say that his scholarship was overshadowed by his fame and prestige as a .philosopher and a spiritual man

al-`Allamah at-Tabataba'i returned to Tabriz in ۱۳۵۳ (۱۹۳۴) where he was welcomed as a religous scholar. There he spent his time teaching higher philosophy to willing disciples - but it was a small place for his talents. In ۱۳۶۴ (۱۹۴۵) he migrated to Qum, the .most important centre of religious education in Iran

In Qum, he remained engaged in imparting knowledge of ethics, philosophy and exegesis of the Qur'an to the students who had

already attained to a high level of erudition. There he remained till his death on .Sunday, ۱۸/۱/۱۴۰۲ (۱۵/۱۱/۱۹۸۱). May Allah bestow His mercy on him. Amen

Many religious leaders of the present generation were and are among his students and disciples, the most famous being the late Murtada Mutahhari (۱۳۳۸/ ۱۹۲۰ - ۱۳۹۹/ .(۱۹۷۹

al-`Allamah at Tabataba'i's fame rests on his various academic works - the , most important being his great exegesis of the Qur'an, al-Mizan fitafsiri'l-Qur'an. It may correctly be said to be the foundation stone of the academic prestige which al-`Allamah at-Tabataba'i was accorded in the Muslim world.

Among his other works is Usul-e falsafah wa rawesh-a realism (The Fundamentals of philosophy and the Doctrine of Realism). This book is a comparative study of Islamic philosophy and various modern anti-Islamic schools of thoughts, especially the Marxism. His disciple, late Murtada Mutahhari, wrote footnotes and explanations to .this work, thus making it easily comprehensible to the average man

A third book Shi`ah dar Islam (Shi`ah in Islam), was first published in Persian; later it was published in English also, with the title: Shi`ite Islam. This book is based on al-`Allamah's discussions with Professor Kenneth Morgan of Colgate University, held in .the summer of ۱۳۸۴ (۱۹۶۳) about Shi'ah and Shi'ism

However, it is the tafsir, al-Mizan (published in Arabic in ۲۰ volumes) which presents the true picture of the author's academic taste and his way of thinking. Before starting this work, the author made a detailed plan to explain the Qur'an with the

help of the Qur'an itself; and he faithfully fulfilled this pledge upto the end of the book. .He has outlined this scheme in his Preface, in volume one

It was a grace of Allah that He inspired us a few years ago to prepare and publish a tafsir of the Qur'an in English. We wanted it to be a tafsir that would help the reader to understand the divine Book and its verses, as much as practically possible - a tafsir that would bring its sublime meanings and divine themes nearer to the human mind; would explain the context in which the verses and chapters were revealed, would cover the points that are necessary for understanding its meaning and fully com... prehending its import - all this without ignoring the Tradition of the Prophet and his .Ahlu 'l-bayt (as) in arriving at the final conclusion

On the other hand, we wanted it to be in sympathy with the mentality of the present day's readers, Muslim as well as non-Muslim, looking at the problems that boggle their minds and the questions that demand responsible and knowledgeable answers - .to the extent it is related to the Qur'an and its explanation

After much deliberation, we found that tafsir, al-Mizan, satisfies our both .requirements to a great extent

So, seeking the help of Allah, we decided to get it translated in the English language. Even before embarking on this work, we were fully aware that it was a gigantic task; we understood that the responsibility would be heavy

and the efforts to bring this scheme to completion herculean; the expenses would be .huge and the difficulties himalayan

We knew all of it, and our only weapon was, and is, our reliance on Allah. We sought His help to make our dream come true; and to help us reach the end goal and prepare and publish the complete set. A few years ago, we entered into an agreement with someone to translate the first volume; but he did not fulfil his promise, although we .gave him all the time and facilities - and even more - that were needed for it

At last we requested al-`Allamah ar-Radawi to take this important responsibility on his shoulders, and we are thankful to Allah that al-`Allamah ar-Radawi fulfilled his .promise

We have written in short about al-`Allamah as-Sayyid Sa'eed Akhtar Rizvi (s/o as-Sayyid Abu 'l-Hasan [١٣٠٩/١٨٩١ -١٣٩٤/١٩٧٤]) in the preface of his book, The Family Life :of Islam, in which we, inter alia,wrote

Sayyid Rizvi is one of the most sincere preachers of Islam and an active scholar, both when he was in Tanzania in the Bilal Muslim Mission (an Islamic organization active in Tanzania), and also now that he has returned to his own country of India. In the way .of spreading Islam he has rendered enormous services and has been most active

al-`Allamah Rizvi has written scores of books and booklets in English, Urdu and Swahili, many of which have been published; and we have given in the above-mentioned preface some titles which

have been published by us. Some of his books have been translated and published by .us in French,. Italian, Japanese, Thai, Indonesian, Hausa and some other languages

Here we must express our thanks to him for the efforts he has made and the difficulties he has overcome in rendering al-Mizan into English. The original Arabic book is replete with academic terms of all disciplines, Islamic as well as non-Islamic, .and with philosophical discussions related mostly to metaphysics

The learned translator has discharged his trust faithfully and conveyed the original idea into English truthfully. What you find in your hands is the true rendering of what al-`Allamah at-Tabataba'i wrote in Arabic. The translator has written some footnotes .where he thought it necessary - without altering the original text in any way

We left the entire responsibility of the translation in the hands of the translator, relying on his erudition and knowledge of Arabic language, philosophy and Islamic subjects and his long experience in rendering purely Islamic esoteric ideas into a .western language like English

Now he is personally responsible for the English translation, just as al-`Allamah at-Tabataba'i (may Allah have His mercy on him!) was personally responsible for the explanations of the Qur'anic verses, and the general discussions he wrote in his tafsir, .al-Mizan

:We have prepared two lists for this book

.١ Names of the authors referred to in the twenty volumes of al-Mizan.

.٢ Names of the books which need a somewhat detailed introduction.

These two lists have been added in the first volume of the English

.translation only; two other lists will be printed with every volume

We pray to Allah and beseech Him to make our deed purely for His pleasure, to help us complete the work we have started, and to guide us aright in every step we put .forward on this road. Surely, He is the best Guardian and the best Helper

World Organization For Islamic Services

(Board of Writing, Translation and Publication)

۱۷/۸/۱۹۸۱ ۲۷/۱۰/۱۴۰۲

Tehran - IRAN

Preface

All praise is for Allah Who sent down the Qur'an to His servant so that he may be a warner to the worlds; and blessings be on him whom He sent as a witness, and a bearer of good news and a warner, and as one inviting to Allah by His permission, and as a light-giving torch; and on his progeny from whom Allah kept away the .uncleanliness and whom He purified a thorough purifying

In this preface we shall describe the method adopted in this book to find out the .meanings of the verses of the Qur'an

exegesis), that is, explaining the meanings of the Qur'anic verse, = (التفسير at-Tafsir clarifying its import and finding out its significance, is one of the earliest academic activities in Islam. The interpretation of the Qur'an began with its revelation, as is :clear from the words of Allah

Even as We have sent among you an Apostle from among you who recites to you Our communications and purifies you and teaches you the Book and the wisdom and teaches you that which you did not

.(know (٢ :١٥١

The first exegetes were a few companions of the Prophet, like Ibn `Abbas, `Abdullah ibn `Umar, Ubayy (ibn Ka'b) and others. (We use the word, `companion', for other than 'Ali) because he and the Imams from his progeny have an unequalled distinction .- an unparalleled status, which we shall explain somewhere else

Exegesis in those days was confined to the explanation of literary aspects of the verse, the background of its revelation and, occasionally interpretation of one verse with the help of the other. If the verse was about a historical event or contained the realities of genesis or resurrection etc., then sometimes a few Tradition of the .Prophet were narrated to make its meaning clear

The same was the style of the disciples of the companions, like Mujahid, Qatadah, Ibn Abi Layla, ash-Sha'bi, as-Suddi and others, who lived in the first two centuries of hijrah. They relied even more on Tradition, including the ones forged and interpolated .by the Jews and others

They quoted those Tradition to explain the verses which contained the stories of the previous nations, or which described the realities of genesis, for example, creation of the heavens and the earth, beginning of the rivers and mountains, the "Iram" (the city of the tribe of `Ad), of Shaddad the so-called "mistakes" of the prophets, the alterations of the books and things like that. Some such matters could be found even .in the exegesis ascribed to the companions

During the reign of the caliphs, when the neighbouring countries were

conquered, the Muslims came in contact with the vanquished people and were involved in religious discussions with the scholars of various other religions and sects. .(عِلمُ الكلام) This gave rise to the theological discourses- known in Islam as 'Ilmu'l-kalam

Also, the Greek philosophy was translated into Arabic. The process began towards the end of the first century of hijrah (Umayyad's period) and continued well into the third century (Abbasid's reign). This created a taste for intellectual and philosophical .arguments in the Muslim intelligentsia

Sufism, mysticism) raised its head in the = التصـوف) At the same time, at-tasawwuf society; and people were attracted towards it as it held out a promise of revealing to them the realities of religion through severe self-discipline and ascetical rigours - .instead of entangling them into verbal polemics and intellectual arguments

And there emerged a group, who called themselves people of tradition, who thought that salvation depended on believing in the apparent meanings of the Qur'an and the tradition, without any academic research. The utmost they allowed was looking into .literary value of the words

Thus, before the second century had proceeded very far, the Muslim society had broadly split in four groups: The theologians, the philosophers, the Sufis and the people of tradition. There was an intellectual chaos in the ummah and the Muslims, generally speaking, had lost their bearing. The only thing to which all were committed was the word, “There is no god except Allah, and Muhammad (saw) is the Messenger .”"of Allah

They differed with each other in

everything else. There was dispute on the meanings of the names and attributes of Allah, as well as about His actions; there was conflict about the reality of the heavens and the earth and what is in and on them; there were controversies about the decree of Allah and the divine measure; opinions differed whether man is a helpless tool in divine hands, or is a free agent; there were wranglings about various aspects of reward and punishment; arguments were kicked like ball, from one side to the other concerning the realities of death, al-barzakh (البرزَخ = intervening period between death and the Day of Resurrection); resurrection, paradise and hell.

In short, not a single subject, having any relevance to religion, was left without a discord of one type or the other. And this divergence, not unexpectedly, showed itself in exegesis of the Qur'an. Every group wanted to support his views and opinions from the Qur'an; and the exegesis had to serve this purpose.

The people of tradition explained the Qur'an with the Tradition ascribed to the companions and their disciples. They went ahead so long as there was a tradition to lead them on, and stopped when they could not find any such tradition (provided the meaning was not self-evident). They thought it to be the only safe method, as Allah says:

. . . and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge say:' "We believe in it, it is all from our Lord." (٣:٧).

But they were mistaken. Allah has not said

in His Book that rational proof had no validity. How could He say so when the authenticity of the Book itself depended on rational proof. On the other hand, He has never said that the words of the companions or their disciples had any value as religious proof. How could He say so when there were such glaring discrepancies in ?their opinions

In short, Allah has not called us to the sophistry which accepting and following contradictory opinions and views would entail. He has called us, instead, to meditate .on the Qur'anic verses in order to remove any apparent discrepancy in them

Allah has revealed the Qur'an as guidance, and has made it a light and an explanation of everything. Why should a light, seek brightness from others' light? Why should guidance be led by others' guidance? Why should “an explanation of everything” be ?explained by others' words

The theologians' lot was worse all the more. They were divided into myriads of sects; and each group clung to the verse that seemed to support its belief and tried to .explain away what was apparently against it

The seed of sectarian differences was sown in academic theories or, more often than not, in blind following and national or tribal prejudice; but it is not the place to describe it even briefly. However, such exegesis should be called adaptation, rather than explanation. There are two ways of explaining a verse – One may say: “What does the Qur'an say?” Or one may say: “How can this

"?verse be explained, so as to fit on my belief

The difference between the two approaches is quite clear. The former forgets every pre-conceived idea and goes where the Qur'an leads him to. The latter has already decided what to believe and cuts the Qur'anic verses to fit on that body; such an .exegesis is no exegesis at all

The philosophers too suffered from the same syndrome. They tried to fit the verses on the principles of Greek philosophy (that was divided into four branches: Mathematics, natural science, divinity and practical subjects including civics). If a .verse was clearly against those principles it was explained away

In this way the verses describing metaphysical subjects, those explaining the genesis and creation of the heavens and the earth, those concerned with life after death and those about resurrection, paradise and hell were distorted to conform to the said .philosophy

That philosophy was admittedly only a set of conjectures - unencumbered with any test or proof; but the Muslim philosophers felt no remorse in treating its views on the system of skies, orbits, natural elements and other related subjects as the absolute .truth with which the exegesis of the Qur'an had to conform

The Sufis kept their eyes fixed on esoteric aspects of creation; they were too occupied with their inner world to look at the outer one. Their tunnel-like vision .prevented them from looking at the things in their true perspective

Their love of esoteric made them look for inner interpretations of the verses; without any regard to

their manifest and clear meanings. It encouraged the people to base their .explanations on poetic expressions and to use anything to prove anything

The condition became so bad that the verses were explained on the-basis of the numerical values of their words; letters were divided into bright and dark ones and ?the explanations were based on that division. Building castle in the air, wasn't it

Obviously, the Qur'an was not revealed to guide the Sufis only; nor had it addressed itself to only those who knew the numerical values of the letters (with all its .ramifications); nor were its realities based on astrological calculations

Of course, there are Tradition narrated from the Prophet and the Imams of Ahlu'l-bayt (as) saying for example: “Verily the Qur'an has an exterior and an interior, and its interior has an interior upto seven (or according to a version, seventy) interiors . . . ” But the Prophet and the Imams gave importance to its exterior as much as to its interior; they were as much concerned with its revelation as they were with its .interpretation

We shall explain in the beginning of the third chapter, “The Family of `Imran”, that “interpretation” is not a meaning against the manifest meaning of the verse. Such an .”interpretation should more correctly be called “misinterpretation

This meaning of the word, “interpretation”, came in vogue in the Muslim circles long after the revelation of the Qur'an and the spread of Islam. What the Qur'an means by the word, “interpretation”, is something other than the

.meaning and the significance

In recent times, a new method of exegesis has become fashionable. Some people, supposedly Muslims, who were deeply influenced by the natural sciences (which are based on observations and tests) and the social ones (that rely on induction), followed .the materialists of Europe or the pragmatists

Under the influence of those anti-Islamic theories, they declared that the religion's realities cannot go against scientific knowledge; one should not believe except that which is perceived by any one of the five senses; nothing exists except the matter and .its properties

What the religion claims to exist, but which the sciences reject - like The Throne, The Chair, The Tablet and The Pen - should be interpreted in a way that conforms with the science; as for those things which the science is silent about, like the resurrection etc., they should be brought within the purview of the laws of matter; the pillars upon which the divine religious laws are based - like revelation, angel, Satan, prophethood, apostleship, imamah (Imamate) etc. - are spiritual things, and the spirit is a development of the matter, or let us say, a property of the matter; legislation of those laws is manifestation of a special social genius, who ordains them after healthy and .fruitful contemplations, in order to establish a good and progressive society

They have further said: One cannot have confidence in the Tradition, because many are spurious; only those Tradition may be relied upon which are in conformity with the Book. As for the

Book itself, one should not explain it in the light of the old philosophy and theories, because they were not based on observations and tests - they were just a sort of .mental exercise which has been totally discredited now by the modern science

The best, rather the only, way is to explain the Qur'an with the help of other Qur'anic .verses - except where the science has asserted something which is relevant to it

This, in short, is what they have written, or what necessarily follows from their total reliance on tests and observations. We are not concerned here with the question whether their scientific principles and philosophic dicta can be accepted as the .foundation of the Qur'an's exegesis

But it should be pointed out here that the objection which they have levelled against the ancient exegetes - that theirs was only an adaptation and not the explanation -is equally true about their own method; they too say that the Qur'an and its realities must be made to conform with the scientific theories. If not so, then why do they insist that the academic theories should be treated as true foundations of exegesis from ?which- no deviation could be allowed

.This method improves nothing on the discredited method of the ancients

If you look at all the above-mentioned ways of exegesis, you will find that all of them suffer from a most serious defect: They impose the results of academic or philosophic arguments on the Qur'anic meanings; they make the Qur'an conform to an

extraneous idea. In this way, explanation turns into adaptation, realities of the Qur'an are explained away as allegories and its manifest meanings are sacrificed for so-.”called “interpretations

:As we mentioned in the beginning, the Qur'an introduces itself as

- ;(the guidance for the worlds (۳:۹۶
- ,(the manifest light (۴:۱۷۴
- .(the explanation of every thing (۱۶:۸۹

But these people, contrary to those Qur'anic declarations, make it to be guided by extraneous factors, to be illuminated by some outside theories, and to be explained !by something other than itself

What is that “something else”? What authority has it got? And if there is any difference in various explanations of a verse -and indeed there are most serious ?differences - which mediator should the Qur'an refer to

What is the root-cause of the differences in the Qur'an's explanations? It could not happen because of any difference in the meaning of a word, phrase or sentence. The Qur'an has been sent down in plain Arabic; and no Arab (or Arabic-knowing non-Arab) .can experience any difficulty in understanding it

Also, there is not a single verse (out of more than six thousand) which is enigmatic, obscure or abstruse in its import; nor is there a single sentence that keeps the mind wandering in search of its meaning. After all, the Qur'an is admittedly the most eloquent speech, and it is one of the essential ingredients of eloquence that the talk .should be free from obscurity and abstruseness

Even those verses that are counted among the “ambiguous” ones have no ambiguity in their

meanings; whatever the ambiguity, it is in identification of the particular thing or individual from among the group to which that meaning refers. This statement needs :some elaborations

In this life we are surrounded by matter; even our senses and faculties are closely related to it. This familiarity with matter and material things has influenced our mode of thinking. When we hear a word or a sentence, our mind races to its material .meaning

When we hear, for example, the words, life, knowledge, power, hearing, sight, speech, will, pleasure, anger, creation and order, we at once think of the material manifestations of their meanings. Likewise, when we hear the words, heaven, earth, tablet, pen, throne, chair, angel and his wings, and Satan and his tribe and army, the .first things that come into our minds are their material manifestations

Likewise, when we hear the sentences, “Allah created the universe”, “Allah did this”, “Allah knew it”, “Allah intended it” or “intends it”, we look at these actions in frame of .“time”, because we are used to connect every verb with a tense

:In the same way, when we hear the verses

- . . . and with Us is more yet (۵۰:۳۵),
- . . . We would have made it from before Ourselves (۲۱:۱۷),
- . . . and that which is with Allah is best . . . (۶۲:۱۱),
- . . . and to Him you shall be brought back (۲:۲۸, etc.),

we attach with the divine presence the concept of “place”, because in our minds the

.two ideas are inseparable

:Also, on reading the verses

- ,(And when We intend to destroy a town (۱۷:۱۶
- ,(And We intend to bestow a favour... (۲۸:۵
- ,(and Allah intends ease for you (۲:۱۸۵

we think that the "intention" has the same meaning in every sentence, as is the case .with our own intention and will

In this way, we jump to the familiar (which most often is material) meaning of every word. And it is but natural. Man has made words to fulfil his social need of mutual intercourse; and society in its turn was established to fulfil the man's material needs. Not unexpectedly, the words became symbols of the things which men were .connected with and which helped them in their material progress

But we should not forget that the material things are constantly changing and developing with the development of expertise. Man gave the name, lamp, to a certain receptacle in which he put a wick and a little fat that fed the lighted wick which illumi- nated the place in darkness. That apparatus kept changing until now it has become the electric bulb of various types; and except the name "lamp" not a single component .of the original lamp can be found in it

Likewise, there is no resemblance in the balance of old times and the modern scales - especially if we compare the old apparatus with the modern equipment for weighing .and measuring heat, electirc-current's flow and blood-pressure

And the armaments of old days and the ones invented within our own times

.have nothing in common, except the name

The named things have changed so much that not a single component of the original can be found in them; yet the name has not changed. It shows that the basic element that allows the use of a name for a thing is not the shape of that thing, but its purpose .and benefit

Man, imprisoned as he is within his habitat and habit, often fails to see this reality. That is why al-Hashawiyyah and those who believe that God has a body interpret the Qur'anic verses and phrases within the fame-work of the matter and the nature. But in fact they are stuck with their habit and usage, and not to the exterior of the Qur'an .and the Tradition

Even in the literal meanings of the Qur'an we find ample evidence that relying on the habit and usage in explanation of the divine speech would cause confusion and :anomaly. For example, Allah says

- ;(Nothing is like a likeness of Him (۴۲:۱۱
- Visions comprehended Him not, and He comprehends (all) visions; and He is the ;(Knower of subtilities, the Aware (۶:۷۳
- .(Glory be to Him above what they ascribe (to Him) (۲۳:۹۱; ۳۷:۱۵۹

These verses manifestly show that what we are accustomed to cannot be ascribed to .Allah

It was this reality that convinced many people that they should not explain the Qur'anic words by identifying them with their usual and common meanings. Going a step further, they sought the help of logical and philosophical arguments to avoid

wrong deductions. This gave a foot-hold to academic reasoning in explaining the Qur'an and identifying the individual person or thing meant by a word. Such :discussions can be of two kinds

i) The exegete takes a problem emanating from a Qur'anic statement, looks at it from academic and philosophical point of view, weighs the pros and cons and with the help of the philosophy, science and logic decides what the true answer should be. Thereafter, he takes the verse and fits it anyhow on that answer which, he thinks, is .right

The Muslim philosophers and theologians usually followed this method; but, as .mentioned earlier, the Qur'an does not approve of it

ii) The exegete explains the verse with the help of other relevant verses, meditating on them together - and meditation has been forcefully urged upon by the Qur'an itself - and identifies the individual person or thing by its particulars and attributes .mentioned in the verse

:No doubt this is the only correct method of exegesis. Allah has said

.(And We have revealed the Book to you explaining clearly everything (۱۶:۸۹

Is it possible for such a book not to explain its own self? Also He has described the :Qur'an in these words

A guidance for mankind and clear evidence of guidance and discrimination (between ;(wrong) (۲:۱۸۵

:and He has also said

.(And We have sent down to you a manifest light (۴:۱۷۴

The Qur'an is, accordingly, a guidance, an evidence, a discrimination between right and wrong and a manifest light for the people to guide them aright and

help them in all their needs. Is it imaginable that it would not guide them aright in its own matter, while it is their most important need? Again Allah says:

And (as for) those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them onto Our ways (۲۹:۶۹).

Which striving is greater than the endeavour to understand His Book? And which way is more straight than the Qur'an?

Verses of this meaning are very numerous, and we shall discuss them in detail in the beginning of the third chapter, The Family of `Imran. Allah taught the Qur'an to His Prophet and appointed him as the teacher of the Book:

The Faithful Spirit has descended with it upon your heart that you may be of the warners, in plain Arabic language (۲۶:۱۹۳-۴);

and We have revealed to you the Reminder that you may make clear to men what has been revealed to them, and that haply they may reflect (۱۶:۴۴);

an Apostle . . . who recites to them His communications and purifies them, and . . . teaches them the Book and the Wisdom (۶۲:۲).

And the Prophet appointed his progeny to carry on this work after him. It is clear from his unanimously accepted tradition:

I am leaving behind among you two precious things; as long as you hold fast to them you will never go astray after me: The Book of Allah and my progeny, my family members; and these two shall never separate from each other until they reach me (on) the reservoir.

And

Allah has confirmed, in the following two verses, this declaration of the Prophet that :his progeny had the real knowledge of the Book

Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanliness from you, O people of the House! ; (and to purify you a (thorough) purifying (٣٣:٣٣

Most surely it is an honoured Qur'an, in a Book that is hidden; None do touch it save . (the purified ones (٥۶:٧٧ -٧٩

And the Prophet and the Imams from his progeny always used this second method for explaining the Qur'an, as may be seen in the Tradition that have been narrated from them on exegesis, some of which will be quoted in this book in appropriate places. One cannot find a single instance in their Tradition where they might have taken help .of an academic theory or philosophical postulate for explaining a verse

:The Prophet has said in a sermon

Therefore, when mischief come to confuse you like the segments of darkened night,“ then hold fast to the Qur'an; as it is the intercessor whose intercession shall be granted; and a credible advocate; and whoever keeps it before him, it will lead him to the Garden; and whoever keeps it behind, it will drive him to the Fire; and it is the guide that guides to the best path; and it is a book in which there is explanation, particularization and recapitulation; and it is a decisive (word), and not a joke; and there is for it a manifest (meaning) and an esoteric (one); thus

its apparent (meaning) is firm, and its esoteric (one) is knowledge; its exterior is elegant and its interior deep; it has (many) boundaries, and its boundaries have (many) boundaries; its wonders shall not cease, and its (unexpected marvels shall not .be old

There are in it the lamps of guidance and the beacon of wisdom, and guide to knowledge for him who knows the attributes. Therefore, one should extend his sight; and should let his eyes reach the attribute; so that one who is in perdition may get deliverance, and one who is entangled may get free; because meditation is the life of the heart of the one who sees, as the one having a light (easily) walks in darkness; .therefore, you must seek good deliverance and (that) with little waiting

Ali (a.s.) said, inter alia, speaking about the Qur'an in a sermon: "Its one part speaks` ".with the other, and one portion testifies about the other

This is the straight path and the right way which was used by the true teachers of the !Qur'an and its guides, may Allah's blessings be on them all

We shall write, under various headings, what Allah has helped us to understand from the honoured verses, by the above mentioned method. We have not based the .explanations on any philosophical theory, academic idea or mystical revelation

We have not put into it any outside matter except a fine literary point on which depends the understanding of Arabic eloquence, or a self-evident or practical premises which can be understood

.by one and all

From the discussions, written according to the above- mentioned method, the :following subjects have become crystal-clear

۱ .The matters concerning the names of Allah, and His attributes, like His Life, Knowledge, Power, Hearing, Sight and Oneness etc. As for the Person of Allah, you will .find that the Qur'an believes that He needs no description

۲ .The matters concerning the divine actions, like creation, order, will, wish, guidance, leading astray, decree, measure, compulsion, delegation (of Power), pleasure, .displeasure and other similar actions

۳. The matters concerned with the intermediary links between Allah and man, like the Curtain, the Tablet, the Pen, the Throne, the Chair, the Inhabited House, the Heavens, .the Earth, the Angels, the Satans, and the Jinns etc

۴. The details about man before he came to this world.

۵. The matters related to man in this life, like the history of mankind, knowledge of his self, the foundation of society, the prophethood and the apostleship, the revelation, the inspiration, the book and the religion and law. The high status of the prophets, .shining through their stories, comes under this heading

۶. The knowledge about man after he departs from this world, that is, al-Barzakh.

۷. The matters about human character. Under this heading come the various stages through which the friends of Allah pass in their spiritual journey, like submission, faith, .benevolence, humility, purity of intention and other virtues

(We have not gone into details of the verses of the law, as more appropriately it is a subject for the books of

(.jurisprudence

As a direct result of this method, we have never felt any need to interpret a verse against its apparent meaning. As we have said earlier, this type of interpretation is in fact misinterpretation. As for that "interpretation" which the Qur'an has mentioned in .various verses, it is not a type of "meaning"; it is something else

At the end of the commentaries, we have written some Tradition of the Prophet and the Imams of Ahlu'l-bayt (as), narrated by the Sunni and Shi`ah narrators. But we have not included the opinions of the companions and their disciples, because, first, there is too much confusion and contradiction in them; and second, they are not .vested with any authority in Islam

On going through those Tradition of the Prophet and the Imams (peace be on them all!), you will notice that this "new" method of exegesis (adopted in this book) is in reality the oldest and the original method which was used by the Teachers of the Qur' .(!an (peace of Allah be on them all

Also, we have written separately various topics - philosophical, academic, historical, social and ethical - when there was a need for it. In all such discussions, we have .confined our talk to the basic premises, without going in too much detail

We pray to Allah, High is He, to guide us and keep our talk to the point; He is the Best .Helper and the Best Guide

,Dependent on Allah

Muhammad Husayn at-Tabataba'i

Suratul Fatiha, The Chapter Of The Opening ١:١-٥

point

(١) بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

(٢)

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

(٣) الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

(۴) مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

(۵) إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

.(In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful (١

.(All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds (٢

.(The Beneficent the Merciful (٣

.(The Master of the Day of Judgement (۴

.(Thee do we worship and Thee do we beseech for help (۵

Commentary

Verse ١

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

People often take the name of one of their great and powerful personalities at the time of doing or beginning a work. By this association, it is believed, the work would achieve success, greatness and blessings; or that it would be a memorial to keep the .named one's memory alive for ever

This is also observed in naming a child, a project, a house or an association - they give it the name of a deeply loved or highly respected person, so that his name would continue in this form; for example, a man names his son after his father, in order to .perpetuate the father's memory

This verse runs on the same line. Allah began His speech with His Own name - Great is His name - so that the ideas taught in this chapter be stamped by, and associated with it. Also, it teaches a lesson to mankind, showing them the perfect manner of

starting all their talks and actions; it guides them to put the stamp of the divine name on all their activities; doing every work for the sake of Allah, associating it with His

.good names and attributes

In this way that action would neither be rendered null and void, nor remain incomplete; it has been started in the name of Allah, and negation and annihilation .cannot reach that sacred name

Allah has declared variously in the Qur'an that what is not for His Person must perish, is in vain; He will proceed to the deeds not done for His sake and shall render them as scattered floating dust; He shall forfeit what they have done and shall nullify their .deeds; and that nothing shall remain except His honoured Person

Therefore, what is done for the sake of Allah and performed in His name, shall continue and will not perish. Everything, every work and every affair shall have its share of eternity – as much as it is related to Allah. It is this reality that has been hinted at in the universally accepted tradition of the Prophet: “Every important affair, not begun with the name of Allah, shall remain incomplete. . .” The word al-abtar (الأبتر = translated here as “incomplete”) means a thing whose end is cut off, an animal whose .tail is severed

The preposition “bi” (بِـــ = in, with), in the phrase “In the name of Allah”, is related to an implied verb, “I begin”. This verse, at this particular place, begins the speech which is a single action; this singleness comes from the singleness of its meaning; that is, .the meaning intended to be conveyed, the aim and purpose of the speech

Allah has

:mentioned the purpose for which His speech –the whole Qur'an – has been revealed

indeed, there has come to you a light and a clear Book from Allah; with it Allah . . . .(guides him who follows His pleasure into the ways of safety. . . (۵:۱۵ -۱۶

There are other verses which show that the aim with which the Book – the speech of .Allah – has been sent down is the guidance of the people

Therefore, the full import of the sentence would be as follows: The guidance, total guidance is begun with the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful; He is Allah, Whom the servants return to; He is Beneficent, Who has opened the way of His All-encompassing mercy for believers and disbelievers alike, the mercy which provides them with all that is necessary and good for their existence and life; He is Merciful, Who has reserved His special mercy for the believers, the mercy which ensures their :happiness in the life hereafter and their nearness to their Lord. Allah has said

and My mercy encompasses all things; so I will ordain it (specially) for those who . . . .(guard (against evil) and pay zakat, and those who believe in our signs (۷:۱۵۶

This explanation has been written, putting this verse in the framework of the whole .Qur'an, of which it is the first sentence

:Again, Allah has repeatedly mentioned "chapter" in His speech. For example

;(Say: "Then bring a chapter like this. . ." (۱۰:۳۸

Say: "Then bring ten chapters like

;(it, forged. . . "(۱۱:۱۳

;(And whenever a chapter is revealed. . . (۹:۸۶

.(This is) a chapter which We have revealed. . . (۲۴:۱)

It shows that Allah Himself has divided His speech in various parts, each part being .called a chapter

It naturally means that every chapter is a single unit in structure and in fullness of meaning; and that that unity is not found between various verses of a chapter or between one chapter and the other. It necessarily follows that the theme of every chapter is different from the other; every chapter is revealed with a certain aim in .view, and when that aim is achieved the chapter comes to its end

Therefore, the verse, "In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful" coming at .the beginning of every chapter, refers to the particular theme of that chapter

Accordingly, this verse, at the beginning of this chapter of "The Opening", refers also to the theme of this chapter. It appears from its semantic flow that its purpose is to praise Allah and to pledge the believer's servitude (declaring that he worships only Allah and seeks help from Him only) and then to pray for divine guidance. This speech has been uttered by Allah, on behalf of His servant, so that the servant may learn how, by repeating these words, he may show his gratitude to, and servitude before, .Allah

This pledging of servitude is the important work which the servant of Allah intends to do; and which he begins in the name

of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. In this context, this verse would mean: In Thy .name, I pledge my servitude to Thee

In this first verse of this chapter, therefore, the preposition, “in”, is related to the implied verb, “I begin”; and the aim is to perfect the sincere servitude by addressing the pledge to Allah Himself. Some people have said that the implied verb is “I seek help” (by); although this view is not objectionable, but “I begin” is more appropriate - the chapter explicitly seeks divine help, “and Thee do we beseech for help”; therefore, .it is not necessary in the beginning

name) is the word that points to the named thing or person. It is = الإسم) ”al-Ism“ height, = السّمو) sign, identifying mark) or as-sumuww = السّمه) derived from as-simah eminence). In any case, it is the word by which an individual thing or person is spoken .of or spoken to. Naturally, it is other than, and separate from, the named thing

:The following is a sample of the academic exercises so much loved by the ancients

There is a name that means “the person himself seen in the light of an attribute”; such a name is not separate from the named person; it is the person himself. The word al-The Knower), one of the divine names, points to the Person of Allah as = العالم) Alim seen in the light of His attribute of Knowledge. At the same time, it refers to Allah Who cannot be known except by

.one or the other of His attributes

Let us explain this matter in another way: "Name" points to the named person; likewise the personal traits and characteristics point to the holder of those traits and characteristics – in this way, we may say that the personal traits are the "names" of the person concerned. "Name", accordingly, can be of two kinds: in words, and in .substance

The direct name is of the second type, ,that is, the personal trait that points to its own subjects – for example, the "Knowledge" that points to Allah, the holder of the knowledge. And the word "the Knower" is in reality an indirect name – it points to the direct name, that is, the attribute of knowledge, which in its turn directly points to its holder, that is, Allah. "Knowledge" is, thus, the name of Allah, and "the Knower" is "the ."name of the name

The above was the result of the academic analysis (or should we say, mental luxury!) mentioned earlier; but such things should not be imposed on language and literature. "Name", according to the "plain Arabic language", means what we have written earlier. There was a lot of controversy going on among the theologians of the early .centuries of Islam: whether the name was separate from the named person or not

Such unnecessary polemics is out of place at present times; it is self-evident that "name" and "named" are two things, and not one. We should not waste time and 'energy in quoting the ancients

.arguments and counter-arguments, and in judging who was right

the divine name) was originally al-Ilah; the "I" in the middle was omitted = الله) "Allah" he worshipped) or = أَلَهَ) is derived from alaha (الاله) because of frequent use. Al-Ilah .(he was bewildered = وَلِهَ or أَلِهَ) from aliha or waliha

object-noun); for = المفعول) on meaning of al-maf'ū١ (الفِعال) It is on paradigm of al-fi'al the written); likewise a١-I١ah = المكتوب) means al -maktūb (الكِتاب) example, al-kitab that is the One who is worshipped, or the One about whom (المألوه) means al-Ma'lūh .minds are bewildered

Quite clearly, it has become the proper name of God. It was commonly used in this meaning in Arabic long before the Qur'an was revealed. The fact that even pre-:Islamic Arabs used this name for God, may be inferred from the following verses

And if you should ask them who created them, they would certainly say: `Allah". . . .((۴۳:۸۷

and they say: "This for Allah"-so they assert - "and this is for our associates". . . . . . .((۶:۱۳۶

Other divine names may be used as adjectives for this name; for example, "the Beneficent and the Merciful Allah"; also, this name is used as subject of the verbs derived from other divine names; for example, "Allah knew", "Allah had mercy", "Allah gave sustenance" etc. But the word, "Allah", is never used as adjective to any other name, nor is the verb derived from it used to describe other names. It is a clear proof that it is the

.proper name of God

The divine existence, inasmuch as Allah is the God of everything, presupposes that He should have all the attributes of perfection; and, as a result, this name points to all perfect attributes. That is why it is said that the name, “Allah”, means “the Person Who is the Essential Being, and Who encompasses all the attributes of perfection”. But the fact is that it is the proper name of God and no other meaning (except that related to .worship or bewilderment) has been taken into consideration here

The Beneficent, the Merciful) are two adjectives =الرحمن الرحیم) ”ar-Rahman ar-Rahīm“ . (mercy = الرحمه) derived from ar-rahmah

When you see someone suffering from a deficiency which he cannot remove by himself, the reaction which you experience and which tells you to provide him with what he needs in order to make up his deficiency, is called mercy. Ultimately, mercy means giving and bestowing to fulfill other's need. It is this latter meaning in which .this attribute is used for Allah

is on a paradigm which is used for magnification and (الرحمـــــن) ”ar-Rahman“ الصّفه المُشَبِّهَه) is a paradigm of as-Sifatu 'l-mushabbahah (الرحیم)”exaggeration. “ar-Rahīm perpetual adjective, inseparable attribute). Therefore, “ar-Rahman” (translated = here as “the Beneficent”) relates to that all-encompassing mercy that is bestowed upon the believers and the unbelievers alike. It is used in the Qur'an, mostly in this :meaning. Allah says

;(The Beneficent (God) is firm in power (۲۰:۵

Say: “As for him who remains in error, the Beneficent (God) will

.(surely prolong his length of days. . . (۱۹:۷۵

ar-Rahīm" (translated here as "the Merciful"), on the other hand, is more appropriate" for that mercy which shall remain for ever, the perpetual inexhaustible mercy that :shall be bestowed on the believers in the life hereafter. Allah says

;(and He is Merciful to the believers (۳۳:۴۳ . . .

.(Surely to them (i.e., the believers) He is Compassionate, Merciful (۹:۱۱۷

That is why it is said that the mercy of "ar-Rahman" is common for the believers and .the unbelievers, and that of "ar-Rahīm" is reserved for the believers

Verse ۲

All praise is due to Allah

is to praise someone for a good acquired by his (الحمد) "It has been said that "al- hamd also translated as praise) is more general - it is used = (المَدح"own intention, "al-madh .to praise even that good which someone is given without his will and power

If you praise someone for his benevolence, you may use either word - al-hamd or al-madh but if you want to praise a pearl for its lustre, you may use the verbal-madh, but not al-hamd because the pearl has not acquired that lustre by its own will and power. translated here as "all") in "al-hamd" denotes either species or praise, or each = (الْ" "al and every praise. The end-result is the same in either case; that is why it has been :translated here as "all". Allah says

.(That is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of every thing (۴۰:۶۲

:Whatever there is, is created by Allah. Again He says

.

.(Who made good everything that He has created (۳۲: ۷ . .

.Everything is good because it has been created by Allah and is attributed to Him

In other words, a thing becomes good because it is created by Allah; and everything created by Him is good. Every creature is good and beautiful because Allah has made it so; and every good and beautiful thing is created by Allah, attributed to Him. Allah :says

;(He is Allah, the One, the Subduer (of all) (۳۹:۴

.(And the faces are humbled before the Living, the Self-subsistent God . . . (۲۰:۱۱۱

In other words, He has created the creatures by His own knowledge, power and will, and not because He was compelled by someone else to do so. Therefore, everything .is His own good work, done by His own will

:The above discourse was about Allah's action. Coming to His names, He has said

; (Allah is He besides Whom there is no god; His are the very best names (۲۰:۸

And Allah's are the best names; therefore call on Him thereby, and leave alone those .(who violate the sanctity of His names (۷:۱۸۰

It is clear that Allah is good in His names and good in His actions; and that every good .and beauty emanates from Him

Therefore, Allah is praised for His good names as He is praised for His good actions. Every praise, uttered by any speaker for any good deed is in reality addressed to Allah only; because every good (which is the object of praise) emanates

from Him only. In short, to Him belongs the species of the praise and all and every .praise

The verse: “Thee do we worship”, shows that the whole chapter is revealed on behalf of man. Allah teaches him in this chapter how to praise his Lord and how to show his allegiance to, and humility towards, Him. And the phrase, “All praise is due to Allah”, .further strengthens this inference, as will be seen in the next paragraph

The praise means to attribute, to ascribe; and Allah has declared that He is above all :that His servants ascribe to Him. He has said

Hallowed be Allah (for freedom) from what they ascribe, except the servants of Allah, .(freed (from sins) (۳۷:۱۵۹ -۱۶۰

This declaration is general and unconditional; and it is further proved by the fact that not a single verse in the Qur'an ascribes the action of “praise” to anyone except Allah .(and some of the prophets (who were doubtlessly freed from sins

:Allah addresses Nuh (Noah -a.s.) in these words

.(Say: “All praise is due to Allah who delivered us from the unjust people” (۲۳:۲۸ . . .

:And He quotes Ibrahim (Abraham -a.s.) as saying

.(Praise be to Allah, Who gave me in old age Isma'il and Ishaq . . .” (۱۴:۳۹“

,Also, He told His Prophet, Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), in several places

.(And say: “Praise be to Allah. . . “ (۲۷:۹۳

:(Further, he says about Dawūd and Sulayman (peace be on both of them

“ . . .and they both said: “Praise be to Allah . . .

.(۲۷:۱۵)

Another exception is of the people of the Paradise –and they also are freed from spite :and rancour as well as from vain and sinful words

.(and the last of their cry shall be: "Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds" (۱۰:۱۰ . . .

As for other creatures, the Qur'an never says that they "praise" Allah – they always :"glorify Allah with His praise". Allah says

;(and the angels declare His glory with the praise of their Lord . . . (۴۲:۵ . . .

;(and the thunder declares His glory with His praise . . . (۱۳:۱۳

.(and there is not a single thing but glorifies Him with His praise . . . (۱۷:۴۴

In all these verses "praise" is preceded by glorifying; rather "glorifying" is the main verb and "with praise" is only a clause, attached to it. None except Allah may comprehend the beauty and perfection of His work, nor can anyone else understand :the beauty and perfection of His names and attributes. Allah says

.(they do not comprehend Him in knowledge . . . (۲۰ :۱۱۰ . .

In this background, if they were to praise Him it would mean that they had compre... hended Him in their knowledge; in other words, Allah would be surrounded by their limited understanding, confined within the boundary of their comprehension. Therefore, they were careful enough to first declare His glory from all the limits of :their comprehension, before starting His praise. Allah says

.(surely Allah knows and you do not know (۱۶:۷۴. . .

So far

as His purified servants are concerned, He treats their utterance of praise as though .He Himself has said it, because they are free from sins and defects

From the above discourse, it becomes crystal-clear what the good manner of servitude demands: The servant should praise his Lord in exactly the same words the Lord Himself has chosen for Himself; no deviation from it would be tolerable, as the Prophet has said in an universally accepted tradition; "I do not enumerate Thy praise; "... Thou art as Thou Thyself hast praised Thyself

Therefore, the divine word, "All praise is due to Allah", is a sort of a training to the servant - a training without which he could not know how to declare the praise of .Allah

Verses ۲,۳ and ۴

the Lord of the worlds, the Beneficent, the Merciful, the Master of the Day of Judgement

is the Master Who manages the affairs of His servant. The word, thus, (الرّب) "ar-Rabb" connotes the idea of ownership. Ownership (in our social structure) is a special relationship of one thing with another - a relationship that allows the owner to do with .the owned thing as he wishes

When we say, "This thing belongs to us", it shows that it has a special relationship with us that allows us to do with it as we wish; had it not been for this relationship, we .would not have had this authority over it

In this social context, it is an idea which the society has laid down but which has no

existence outside imagination. This idea is derived from another real and positive :"concept, which too is called "ownership

Our limbs and faculties, like the sight, the hearing, the hands and the feet, belong to us - they exist because of our own existence, they have no independent existence, they depend on us for their existence and continuity, and we use them as we like. This .is the real ownership

The ownership that may be attributed to Allah is the real one, and not that which is based on subjective outlook. Obviously the real ownership cannot be disjoined from .management of the affairs of the owned thing

The owned thing depends on the owner in its existence, as well as in all affairs related to its existence. Allah is "ar-Rabb "the Lord of everything because the Lord is the owner who manages the affairs of, and looks after, the owned thing - and only Allah .has this attribute

the world) which literally means, "what = العالَم) is the plural of al'alam (العالمين) al-'Alamīn" the = القالب) one is known with". This paradigm is used for "instrument", like al-qalab 'the seal, the instrument of sealing), and at-taba = الخاتم) mold, the form), al-khatam .(the stamp, the impress = الطابع)

The word al-'Alam is used for the universe - the whole creation taken together. Also it is used for each genes or species taken separately, for example, the inorganic world, .the vegetable world, the animal world, the human world

,It is also used for a class of a species

like the Arab world, the African world etc. This last meaning is more appropriate in the context of these verses: The verses that enumerate the good names of Allah until they come to "the Master of the Day of Judgement". The judgement is reserved for .mankind alone or together with the jinn

Therefore, the "worlds" should refer to the worlds of the human beings and the jinn, that is, their various groups. The word al'alamin (the worlds) has been used in this :sense in other Qur'anic verses too. Allah says

; (and has chosen you above the women of the worlds (۳:۴۲. . .

;(so that he may be a Warner to the worlds (۲۵:۱. . .

What! do you commit an indecency which any one in the worlds has not done before .(you (۷:۸۰

The Master of the Day of Judgement": We have explained above the meaning of" is derived from al-milk (المالک) "ownership, that is, mastership. The word "al-malik .(possession, to possess = الم_لِک)

the sovereign, the king); it is = المالک) "Some reciters have read this word as "al-malik country; kingdom). The king is the one who has the = المُ_لک) derived from al-mulk authority to manage his nation's affairs; nevertheless he does not own the nation or the country. In other words, he holds the authority for management and .administration

The reciters have given the reasons for their preference of either recitation. But the fact remains that Allah is the Master as well as the King, and both words are equally correct, so

far as the divine authority is concerned. Looking at it from linguistic point of view, the .word, "King" is generally used in context of time and period

It is said, "The King of that time"; but they do not say "the master of that time", as it would be stretching the meaning too far. In this verse, Allah has used this word in reference to a certain "day"; therefore, linguistically, it would be more proper to say, "The King of the Day of Judgement". Moreover, Allah has used the word, "Kingdom" in :context of the same day in other verse

To whom belongs the kingdom of this day? To Allah, the One, the Subduer (of all) .((۴۰:۱۶

Traditions

Ar-Rida (a.s.) said in explanation of the divine words: In the name of Allah: "It means: 'I mark my soul with one of the marks of Allah', and it is (His) worship." He was asked: .("What is the 'mark'?" He said; "The brand."(`Uyūnu '۱-akhbar and Ma'ani 'l-akhbar

The author says: This meaning emanates from the explanation given earlier that the preposition, "in", herein connotes beginning. As the servant marks his worship with the name of Allah, he brands his soul - real doer of the worship - with one of the divine .marks

It is narrated in at-Tahdhīb from as-Sadiq (a.s.), and in `Uyūnu 'l-akhbar andat-Tafsīr of al-`Ayyashi from ar-Rida (a.s.) that this verse "is nearer to the Greatest name of ."Allah than the iris of the eye is from its white

The author says: This tradition will be

.explained when we shall talk about the Greatest name

Amiru 'l-mu'minīn (a.s.) said that (this verse) is from the chapter of The Opening; and verily the Apostle of Allah used to recite it and count it as one of its verses, and he used to say, "The Opening of the Book is `the seven oft-repeated' (verses)". (`Uyūnu 'l-akhbar)

The author says: This matter has also been narrated by the Sunni narrators. ad-Dar-qutnī narrates from Abū Hurayrah that he said: "The Apostle of Allah said: When you recite (the chapter of) The Praise (i.e., The Opening), you shall recite, In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful, because it is the source of the Book and (is) the seven oft-repeated (verses), and, In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful is .one of its verses

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "What have they done? May Allah destroy them! They proceeded to the greatest verse of the Book of Allah, and thought that it would be an innovation ((unlawful act) if they recited it loudly!" (al-Khisal

al-Baqir (a.s.) said: "They stole the most exalted verse of the Book of Allah, (that is) In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. It should be recited at the start of .every big or small work, so that it may be blessed

The author says: There are numerous Tradition of this meaning coming from the Imams of Ahlu 'l-bayt (a.s.). All of them prove that the verse (In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful) is a

part of every chapter, except the ninth (" Repentance"); and the Sunni Tradition also prove it

Anas (ibn Malik) said that the Apostle of Allah said: "Just now a chapter has been sent down to me." Then he began reciting, "In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful." (as-Sahih, Muslim).

Abu Dawud narrates from Ibn `Abbas (and they say that its chain is "correct") that he said: "Verily, the Apostle of Allah did not know the separation of a chapter (and in another narrative it is `end of a chapter') until came down to him: In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful"

The author says: This matter has been narrated by Shi `ite narrators also from al-Baqir (a.s.).

It is reported in al-Kafi, at-Tawhīd, Ma'ani '۱-akhbar and at-Tafsīr of al-`Ayyashi that as-Sadiq (a.s.) said, inter alia, in a tradition: "And Allah is God of everything, ar-Rahman (the Beneficent) for all His creations, ar-Rahīm (the Merciful) especially for the believers."

as-Sadiq (a.s.) has said: "ar-Rahman (the Beneficent) is a special name with a general attribute; and ar-Rahīm (the Merciful) is a general name with a special attribute."

The author says: The preceding Commentary may explain why the mercy of "the Beneficent" is general for the believer and the unbeliever alike, and why that of "the Merciful" is reserved for the believer only.

The description given in this tradition that "the Beneficent is a special name with a general attribute, and the Merciful is a general name with a special attribute ", perhaps this refers to

the fact that the mercy of the Beneficent is limited to this world and is common for the whole creation; and that of the Merciful is common to this world and the hereafter but .is reserved for the believer

In other words, the mercy of the Beneficent is reserved for the creative blessings that are bestowed on believers and unbelievers alike; and that of the Merciful is common to the creative and legislative blessings (the latter opening the way to happiness and felicity) and is reserved for believers, because only the bounties bestowed upon them .will last for ever, and the (good) end is for guarding (against evil) and for piety

It is narrated in Kashfu '۱-ghummah that as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "A mule of my father was lost. He said: `If Allah brought it back to me, I would thank Him with praises He would be pleased with." Shortly afterwards, it was brought before him with its saddle and .(rein (intact

When he sat on it and arrayed his clothes, he raised his head towards heaven and said: 'Praise be to Allah.' He said nothing more. Then he said: "I did not omit, nor did I leave out, anything; I have declared that all praises are for Allah, Powerful and Great ".(is He!; because there is no praise but it is included in this (formula

It is narrated in `Uyūnu 'l-akhbar that 'Ali (a. s.) was asked about its explanation. He said: "Verily, Allah has explained to His servants broadly some of His bounties

on them, as they cannot know all His bounties in detail - they are beyond enumeration and description. Therefore, He said: Say: 'All praise is for Allah on what He has ” '.bestowed upon us

The author says: The Imam points to the fact mentioned earlier that the praise, in this verse, is from the servant, and that Allah has revealed it to teach him the manners of .servitude and worship

From Philosophical Point Of View

Reason tells us that an effect, as well as all its characteristics and affairs, depend on its cause; whatever perfection it may be having, is a shadow of the cause. If beauty or goodness has any existence, then its perfect and independent entity is for Allah only, .as He is the Cause of all causes

The praise and thank is addressed, in reality, to the cause which creates the perfection and excellence referred to. As every perfection is caused by Allah, every praise and thank, in reality, is addressed to Allah. Therefore, all praise is for, and due .to Allah

Verse ۵

Thee do we worship and Thee do we beseech for help

means slave, a human being who is owned. In its abstract sense, it is (العَبد)”al- Abd“ :applied to other intellectual beings also, as the words of Allah show

There is no one in the heavens and the earth but will come to the Beneficent God as .(a slave) (۱۹:۹۳ = عبْداً ”(“`abdan

to serve, = العِباده) “ In modern usage, it is commonly translated as 'servant.' “al -'Ibadah to worship, to obey) is derived

from this word. Its inflexion and meaning changes according to the context. al-Jawhari has written in his dictionary, as-Şihah, that "the basis ofal-'ubūdiyyah (العبوديه = 'bondage, servitude) is "al-khudu (الخضوع) submission".

But this explanation is not of the word; it only shows a concomitant quality of its meaning; because al-khudu` is used with the preposition "li (لِـ), and al-`ibadah is used without any preposition.(1)

When a servant of Allah worships Him, he stands before the Lord as a slave stands before his master. That is why worship is diametrically opposed to arrogance and pride - but it is not so opposed to polytheism; after all, a slave may be jointly owned by two or more masters. Allah says:

Verily those who are arrogant to My worship shall soon enter Hell, disgraced (40:60).

... and he should not join anyone in the worship of his Lord (18:110).

It should be noted here that polytheism - joining someone in the worship of Allah - is a possibility, and that is why it has been made subject of this prohibition; none forbids an impossible thing. But arrogance does not exist with worship, and that is why the expression, "arrogant to my worship", has been used in the first verse.

Servitude is effective in those affairs which are owned or controlled by the master; and not in other matters related to the slave, like his being son of his father, or having a height of so many centimetres - there is no submission or servitude in such

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1- This argument seems inconclusive. If two words are synonymous, it is not necessary for them to have the same preposition, al-Mawla (المولى) and al-awla (الأولى) have the same meaning - guardian, master, but the former is used without a preposition while the latter is followed by the preposition "bi" (بِـ = for, with, etc.).

things. But the mastership of Allah is not limited; His mastership is not shared by anyone else, nor is the servitude of the creatures divided between Allah and someone .else

A master has only limited authority over his servants – he may employ them to perform certain duties, but he cannot kill them or punish them unjustly. But Allah has total and all-encompassing authority over His servants; He does whatsoever He wills with them and about them. His ownership is unconditional and unlimited; and the .servitude of His creatures is likewise unconditional and unlimited

This "ownership" is true and exclusive on both sides: The Lord has the exclusive ownership, and the slave has the exclusive servitude. The construction of the sentence, "Thee do we worship", points to this exclusiveness – the object, "Thee", has .been placed before the verb, and worship is mentioned without any condition

It has been explained earlier that the owned thing exists and subsists because of, and with, its owner. In this sense, it should not divert an onlooker's attention from its owner. You look at a house belonging to Zayd; if you are looking at it merely as a house, you may possibly lose sight of Zayd; but if you look at it from the angle that it is .a property of Zayd, you cannot wean your thoughts from him

The only true attribute of the universe is that it is created and owned by Allah. Nothing in the creation can hide the divine presence, nor should looking at

:these things make one forgetful of Allah. He is ever present, as He has said

Is it not sufficient as regards your Lord that he is a witness over all things? Now surely they are in doubt as to the meeting of their Lord; now surely He encompasses all .(things (۴۱:۵۳-۵۴

The true worship, therefore, is that in which the worshipped and the worshipper both are present. Allah should be worshipped as the One who is present before the worshipper - and that is why the third person of the preceding verses has been ."changed to the second person in this verse, "Thee do we worship

The worshipper should be present before his Lord, not only with his body but also with his soul; otherwise, the worship would be a body without soul, a form without life. Nor should he divide his attention between his Lord and someone (or something) else - neither openly, (as the idol worshippers do) - nor secretly (like the one whose mind is on something else while worshipping Allah, or the one who worships Allah because he .(wants to enter the Garden or to save himself from the hell

All these diversions are various facets of polytheism, and Allah has forbidden it in His :Book

.(therefore, worship Allah, being sincere to Him in religion (۳۹:۲ . . .

Now, surely, sincere religion is for Allah (alone), and (as for) those who take guardians besides Him, (saying): We do not worship them save that they may make us nearer to ,Allah

.(surely Allah will judge between them in that in which they differ (۳۹:۳

Worship shall be a true worship when it is done with pure intention, and this purity has been named as the presence of the worshipper. This will happen only when the attention of the Worshipper is not fixed on anyone other than Allah (otherwise, it would be polytheism); and when his aim of worship is not any other hope or fear like .(that of the paradise or the hell (otherwise, the worship would not be purely for Allah

Moreover, he should not be concerned with his own self, as it would tantamount to egotism and arrogance, completely opposite of submission and servitude. Probably the plural pronoun - "we" worship - points to this fact; it negates the individuality of the worshipper as he includes himself in a multitude of people; it removes egotism, .creates humility, and effaces the tendency of self-importance

The declaration of one's servitude with the words, "Thee do we worship", is free from all defects, so far as its meaning and purity are concerned. Yet, as the servant describes the worship as his own act, it could create an impression that he thought to be independent in existence, power and will, while in fact he is only a slave and slave .owns nothing

The second sentence, "and Thee do we beseech for help", removes this possible misunderstanding. It means: "We ascribe the worship to ourselves and make this claim only with Thy help; we are never independent of

.Thee

In other words, the complete verse, “Thee do we worship and Thee do we beseech for help”, gives a single meaning, and that is “worship with purity of intention”. Probably, that is why both sentences have the same style; otherwise, it could be said, 'Thee do we worship; help us and guide us . . .'The style has been changed in the next .verse, “guide us . . .” and its reason will be explained later

The above-given explanation makes it clear why the pronouns in this verse have been changed from the third to the second person; why the restrictive device of putting the object (“Thee”) before the verb has been chosen; why the worship, in “do we worship”, is used without any condition; why worshipper includes others with him in this declaration of allegiance and worship; why the second sentence is needed after .the first; and why both have the same construction and style

The scholars have written other fine points about this verse; the reader is advised to refer to their books for this purpose; Allah is the creditor whose debt can never be .repaid

Suratul Fatiha: Verses ۶-۷

point

(۶) اهدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُستَقِيمَ

(۷) صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنعَمتَ عَلَيهِمْ غَيرِ الْمَغضُوبِ عَلَيهِمْ وَلاَ الضَّالِّينَ

,(Guide us to the straight path (۶

the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours, not of those inflicted by .(Thy wrath, nor of those gone astray (۷

Commentary

Qur’an

”Guide us to the straight path . . . nor of those gone astray: The meaning of “al-hidayah

(guidance, to guide = الهدایه)

p: ۵۱

"may easily be understood, if we consider first the significance of the "path"."as-Sirat (الصراط = path) is synonymous with at-tarīq (الطريق) and as-sabīl (السّبيل).

In these verses, Allah has commended the path that it is straight and that it is the path taken by those upon whom Allah has bestowed His bounties and favours. It is this path guidance to which has been asked for. And it is the ultimate goal of the worship: The servant prays to his Lord that his worship, clean from all impurities, be performed in this path.

Allah has mentioned in His Book that He has laid down a path for man, nay, for all the creation, a path upon which they are proceeding. He says:

O man! Surely thou art striving to thy Lord, a hard striving, until thou art to meet Him (۸۴:۶));

. . . and to Him is the ultimate resort (۶۴:۳);

. . . now surely to Allah do all affairs eventually come (۴۲:۵۳).

There are many such verses, showing that all are proceeding on a prescribed road and that their destination is Allah. So far as the way is concerned, Allah has said that there are two ways, not one:

Did I not enjoin on you, O children of Adam! that you should not worship the Satan? Surely he is your open enemy. And that you should worship Me; this is the straight path (۳۰:۶۰-۶۱).

So, there is a straight path, and also there is another path. Again He has said:

. . . then verily I

am near; I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he calls on Me, so they should answer My call and believe in Me, that they may walk in the right way (۲:۱۸۶);

Call upon Me, I will answer you. Verily, those who are arrogant to My worship shall soon enter hell, disgraced (۴۰:۶۰).

Obviously, Allah is near to His servants, and the nearer path to Him is that of worship and prayer. Compare it with description of those who do not believe in Him:

. . . these shall be called to from a far-off place (۴۱:۴۴).

Obviously, the station of unbelievers is far-off place. There are thus two ways to Allah, a near one - the way of the believers - and a distant one, that of the others. It is the first difference between the ways.

Second difference:

Surely (as for) those who reject Our signs and turn away from them haughtily, the doors of heaven shall not be opened for them (۷:۴۰).

What is the function of a door? To let authorized people pass through it and bar the entry to unauthorized ones. The verse shows that there is a passage from the lower level to the upper heights.

On the other hand, Allah says:

. . . and to whomsoever My wrath descends he shall perish indeed (۲۰:۸۱).

The word translated here as "shall perish" literally means "shall fall down". Therefore, there is another passage coming for the upper heights to the lower level. Also He says:

. . . and whoever adopts unbelief instead of

.(faith, he indeed has gone astray from (i.e., has lost) the right way (٢: ١٠٨

Allah uses the term "polytheism" for "going astray".(١) Accordingly, people are divided :into three categories

First, those who proceed to the upper heights – those who believe in the signs of Allah .and are not arrogant to His worship

Second, those who fall down to the lower levels – they are those upon whom the .wrath of Allah has descended

Third, those who have gone astray from the right path; they are lost, wandering .hither and thither

The last verse under discussion points to these three categories: "the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours, not of those inflicted by Thy wrath, nor of ".those gone astray

Obviously, "the straight path" is separate from the last two paths. It is the path of the believers who are not arrogant. At the same time, the following verse shows that the :straight path itself may be divided in various "traffic lanes", ways or branches

Allah will exalt those of you who believe, and those who are given knowledge, in . . . .(high degrees . . . (٥٨:١١

:This statement needs some elaboration

Every straying is polytheism and vice versa, as may be inferred from the words of :Allah

and whoever adopts unbelief instead of faith, he indeed has gone astray from the . . . .(right way (٢:١٠٨

:The same is the theme of the verse

Did not I enjoin on you, O children of Adam! that you should not worship the Satan?

Surely he is

.As may be seen in the verses ۳۶:۶۰-۶۲, quoted above -۱

your open enemy. And that you should worship Me; this is the straight path. And .(certainly he has led astray a great multitude from among you (۳۶:۶۰ - ۶۲

Likewise, the Qur'an counts polytheism as injustice and vice versa, as may be seen in the words which the Satan shall utter after the judgment will be delivered against him :and his followers

surely I disbelieved in your associating me with Allah, before; surely it is the unjust . . . .(that shall have the painful punishment (۱۴:۲۲

:Then it counts injustice as straying

Those who believe and do not mix up their faith with injustice, those are they who .(shall have the security and they are those who shall be guided aright (۶:۸۲

It should be noted that they shall be guided aright and shall have security against straying or its resulting punishment only if they do not mix their faith with injustice and .inequity

It is clear from looking at these verses together that going stray, polytheism and inequity all have the same effect; all three are adjunct to each other. That is why it is said that each of them is identifiable by the other two. For all practical purposes the .three are one and the same, although they may be different in their literal meaning

The straight path, then, is different from that of those who have gone astray; it is a path which is far away from polytheism and injustice. There can be no straying in this path - neither in hidden ideas

and beliefs (for example, the disbelief or the thoughts disapproved by Allah); nor in open actions or omissions (like committing a sin or omitting a good deed). It is the true .monotheism in belief and in deeds

And what is there after the truth but error? The above-mentioned verse ۶:۸۲ fits on it completely. That verse guarantees security in the way and promises perfect guidance. The promise is inferred from the fact that the original word translated as "guided aright" is noun-agent, and the grammarians say that such a noun is really .made for future. This is one feature of the straight path

:Allah has identified those bestowed with divine favours, in the verse

And whoever obeys Allah and the Apostle, these are with those upon whom Allah has bestowed favours from among the prophets and the truthful and the martyrs and the .(righteous ones; and excellent are these as companions (۴:۶۹

:The belief and the obedience have been explained shortly before it in these words

But no! by your Lord! they do not believe (in reality) until they make you a judge of that which has become a matter of disagreement among them, and then they do not find any straitness in their selves as to what you have decided, and submit with total submission. And if We had prescribed for them: Kill yourselves or go forth from your homes, they would not have done it except a few of them; and if they had done what they were admonished, it would have certainly

. (been better for them and most efficacious in strengthening (them) (۴ :۶۵-۶۶

Those who truly believe are really strong in their servitude and submission, in words and in deeds; in appearance and in secret. Yet such perfect believers shall be placed in a rank behind those upon whom Allah has bestowed favours; that is why Allah has said, “these are with those . . .” and not, 'among those'. They shall be with them, but not of them. It is further strengthened by the last sentence, “and excellent are these .as companions”. Companions are other than the self

:There is another, somewhat similar, verse in fifty-seventh chapter

and (as for) those who believe in Allah and His apostles, these it is that are the truthful .(and the martyrs with their Lord; they shall have their reward and their light . . . (۵۷:۱۹

The believers, thus, shall be included in the ranks of the martyrs and the truthful - in the life hereafter. The fact that it will happen in the next world is inferred from the .”words, “with their Lord”, and “they shall have their reward

Those bestowed with divine favours who are the people of the straight path - with whose relationship the straight path is identified - have greater prestige and higher rank than these believers who have cleansed their beliefs and actions from straying, polytheism and injustice. Pondering on these verses together, one feels sure that this group of the believers (with this quality) still continues; it has not come to

.its end

Had this group completed its term, it would have been counted among (and not, "with") those bestowed with favours; these believers would have gone up and instead of being with those bestowed with favours, would have become part of them. They :probably are among those who have been given knowledge from Allah, as He says

Allah will exalt those of you who believe, and those who are given knowledge, in high .(degrees (۵۸:۱۱

The people of the straight path are bestowed with excellent bounties that are more precious than that of the complete faith and perfect belief. This is the second feature .of the straight path

Allah repeatedly mentions as-sirat (path) and as-sabīl (way) in the Qur'an; but He has never attributed to Himself except one straight path; although He attributes several .ways to Himself

And (as for) those who strive hard for Us. We will most certainly guide them onto Our .(ways (۲۹:۶۹

Likewise, He has never ascribed "the straight path" to any of his servants, the only exception being this verse under discussion which ascribes it to those who are bestowed with divine favours; but He frequently attributes "the way" to one or the :other of His chosen servants

Say: "This is my way; I invite you unto Allah; with clear sight(are) I and he who follows ;(me" (۱۲:۱۰۸

;(and follow the way of him who turns to Me (۳۱:۱۵ . . .

.(the way of the believers . . . (۴:l۱۵ . . .

It is an indication that "the way" is other than

."the straight path"

There may be various and different ways taken by various chosen servants proceeding on the way of worship and submission; but "the straight path" is only one, :as Allah points to it in these words

Indeed, there has come to you a light and a clear Book from Allah; with it Allah guides him who follows His pleasure into the ways of safety and brings them out of utter .(darkness into light by His permission and guides them to the straight path (۵:۱۵-۱۶

See, how the verse refers to "the ways" (in plural), and to "the straight path" (in singular). Now, there may be two explanations for it. Either "the straight path" is the same thing as "the ways", or "the ways" on going further join together and then merges into the straight path. There is another difference between the straight path :and the way. Allah says

.(And most of them do not believe in Allah without associating others (with Him) (۱۲:۱۰۶

Note how the believers are said to associate others with Allah. It shows that some sort of polytheism (that is, straying) may co-exist with belief (and the belief is a "way"); in other words the way may co-exist with polytheism. But the straight path .cannot do so because it is not the path of those who have gone astray

Each of these ways has some excellence or some deficiency - but not so the straight path. Each way is a part of the straight path, but is distinguished from the

other ways. It may be inferred from the above-mentioned verses as well as from :others. For example, Allah says

;(And that you worship Me; this is the straight path (۳۶: ۶۱

Say: "Surely,(as for) me, my Lord has guided me to the straight path; (to) a most right .(religion, the faith of Ibrahim the upright one" (۶:۱۶۱

The worship and the religion are common to all the ways, and they are also "the straight path". The relation of the straight path to the ways of Allah is that of the soul to the body. The body, during the life, undergoes countless changes, varies from day to day - from infancy to childhood; from adolescence to youth, from middle to old age .and to senility

But the soul remains the same, and is always one with body at every stage. Sometimes, the body is inflicted with undesirable effects, which the soul would never .accept, if left to itself

But the soul - the creation of Allah, upon which He created the man - never deteriorates. Yet, in all these states, the body remains one with the soul. Likewise, the ways of Allah are one with the straight path; but sometimes a way - the way of the believers, of the followers of the Prophet of those who turn towards Allah or any other way - suffers from some kind of deterioration, although the straight path is immune .from all defects and imperfections

You have seen how one of the ways, the belief, sometimes combines with polytheism and

straying, but the straight path does not do so. In short, the ways are of various grades -near or distant; safe or unsafe; clean or unclean - but all are in the straight path, or, .let us say, are one with the straight path

:Allah has mentioned this fact, in a parable of truth and falsehood, in these words

He sends down water from the heaven, then the valleys flow according to their measure, and the torrent bears along the swelling foam; and from what they melt in the fire for the sake of(making) ornaments or apparatus arises a scum like it; thus does Allah compare truth and falsehood; then as for the scum, it passes away as a worthless thing; and as for that which profits the people, it remains in the earth; thus .(does Allah set forth parables (۱۳:۱۷

It clearly shows that the hearts and mind differ in their abilities and capacities to receive the divine knowledge and spiritual perfection, although all partake of the .(same divine sustenance. (Its full explanation will be written in the ch. ۱۳

This was, however, the third feature of the straight path. From the above analysis it may be seen that the straight path is a sort of controller of all the ways leading to Allah. We may say that a way leading to Allah leads a man to Him as long as it remains one with the straight path; but the straight path leads to Allah unconditionally, without .any if or but

That is why

p: ۶۱

the straight path). as-Sirat = (الصراط المستقيم" Allah has named it "as-siratu '١-mustaqīm I swallowed it = (صرطتُ صرطاً " means a clear path, and is derived from "saratttu sartan completely); in other words, this clear path swallows its walkers without letting them straight) literally means the one who stands on his legs, = (المستقيم" go out. "al-Mustaqim .and has full control of himself as well as of the things attached to him

In other words, it is a thing which is not subjected to change or variation. Thus "as-siratu 'l-mustaqīm" =the straight path is the path which never fails to guide and to lead :the walker to his destination. Allah says

Then as for those who believe in Allah and hold fast unto Him, soon will He admit them to Mercy from Him and (His) Grace, and guide them unto Himself (by) the straight path .((۴:۱۷۵

:Obviously this guidance does not fail; it always succeeds. Also He has said

Therefore (for) whomsoever Allah intends that He would guide him aright, He expands his breast for Islam, and (for)whomsoever He intends that He should leave him to err, He makes his breast strait and narrow as though he were ascending into the sky; thus does Allah lay uncleanliness on those who do not believe. And this is the .(path of your Lord, (a) straight (path) (۶:۱۲۵ -۱۲۶

That is, this is Allah's path that never changes, nor does it fail to reach its destination. :Again He says

;He said: "This is a straight path with Me

surely as regards My servants, thou hast no authority over them except those who .(follow thee of the deviators" (۱۵:۴۱-۴۲

The verse declares that this is His settled course which never varies. In this way, it :conveys the same idea which is contained in the verse

For you shall not find any alteration in the course of Allah; and you shall not find any .(change in the course of Allah (۳۵:۴۳

:The above-mentioned discourse has made the following points clear

First: There are various ways to Allah, each differing with others in perfection, easiness and smoothness. It all depends on its nearness or remoteness from the basic reality, from the straight path, like the way of submission, of faith, of worship, of .purity of intention or of humility before Allah

Some of the ways leading to the opposite direction are disbelief, polytheism, infidelity, :exceeding the bounds, committing sins etc. Allah has said

And for all are grades according to what they did, and so that He may pay them back .(fully their deeds and they shall not be dealt with unjustly (۴۶:۱۹

The same is the case with the spiritual knowledge which the human mind receives from Allah. They vary according to mental and spiritual capacity of the receivers, and are tinted by colours of visions of the beholders. This fact is shown in the Qur'anic :parable mentioned earlier

He sends down water from the heaven, then the valleys flow according to their .(measure . . . (۱۳:۱۷

Second: The straight path controls all the ways. Likewise, the people

of the straight path (who have been firmly established in it by Allah) do enjoy :complete authority to guide the other servants of Allah. Allah says

;(and excellent are these as companions (۴:۶۹ . . .

Verily, your only Master is Allah and His Apostle and those who believe, those who .(keep up prayer and pay zakat while they are bowing down (۵:۵۵

The last mentioned verse was revealed about 'Ali, the Leader of the faithful (a.s.), as al-mutawatir Tradition say; and he (peace be on him) was the first to open this door in .Islam. More details of it will be given in the fifth chapter

Third: The import of the guidance to the way depends on the meaning of the way means to guide, to lead; it accepts two objects, either without (الهِدایه) itself. al-Hiddyah to) before the second = الی) any preposition (as in the language of Hijaz) or with ila object (as in the language of other tribes). This detail has been given in as-Sihah of al-Jawharī, and obviously it is correct

Before going further, a mistaken notion should be removed. Some people think that the meaning of guidance changes, depending on whether its second object is preceded by the preposition ila or not. If there is no such preposition, then according to them, guidance means "to convey to the destination"; if it is preceded by ila, then it ."denotes "to show the path

:In evidence, they offer the following verses

Surely you cannot guide whom you love, but Allah guides whom He

.(pleases (۲۸:۵۶

This verse, in which the verbs, “cannot guide” and “guides”, have been used without .preposition, says that the Prophet could not guide whom he pleased

But it is known that he, throughout his life, guided the people, that is, showed them .the path of Allah. Therefore, what has been negated must be the other meaning

What the verse, then, says is this: you cannot convey to the spiritual goal whom you please; but it is Allah who conveys to that destination whom He pleases. This :difference in meaning is more clearly seen in the verses

.(And We would certainly have guided them in the right path (۴:۶۸

The verb (in the Arabic text) has been used without any preposition and it refers to the divine guidance -that is, conveyance to destination. And Allah addresses the Prophet :in these words

.(and most surely you guide to the right path (۴۲:۵۲

Here the verb is followed by ila and the sentence attributes to the Prophet the task of .guidance, in the meaning of showing the way

According to their reasoning the three verses put together show that when guidance is used in the meaning of “conveying to destination”, its second object accepts no .preposition; when it is used for “showing the path”, the said object is preceded by ila

But this notion is not supported by the Qur'an. Allah quotes the believer of the people :of Pharaoh as saying

.(O my people! follow me, I will guide you to the right course” (۴۰:۳۸“

Here the Arabic text has no preposition

.and yet it does not mean conveying to destination, it only denotes showing the way

What has been mentioned in the verse ۲۸:۵۶ (Surely you cannot guide whom you love, but Allah guides whom He pleases) is the reality or perfection of guidance. The verse shows that the Prophet could not bestow on his people the perfect guidance, the .reality of guidance, as it was a task that Allah has reserved for Himself

In short, the meaning of guidance does not depend on preposition ila coming or not .coming before the second object. In both cases the meaning is the same

al-Hidayah means to guide, to show the destination by showing the way, or, let us say, to convey to the destination. Guidance, in reality, is reserved for Allah, and He guides His servants by creating such causes that point the destination to them and .lead them to their spiritual goal

:Allah says

Therefore (for) whomsoever Allah intends that He would guide him aright, He ;(expands his breast for Islam (۶:۱۲۵

then their skins and their hearts become pliant to the remembrance of Allah; this is . . . .(Allah's guidance, He guides with it whom He pleases (۳۹:۲۳

The verb "become pliant" is followed by the preposition "to", giving the verb a shade of meaning of inclination and repose. Guidance, thus, means that Allah creates in the heart an aptitude by which it initiates, accepts, inclines towards and becomes serene .in the remembrance of Allah

It has been mentioned earlier that there are many ways leading to

Allah. Consequently, guidance for one way would differ from those of the others. Each :way has a special guidance of its own. This variation has been hinted at in the verse

And (as for) those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them unto Our .(ways; and Allah is most surely with the doers of good (۲۹:۶۹

A man strives "in the way of Allah"; and another strives "for Allah". There is a great difference between the two. The first tries to keep the way safe and free from all .dangers and blockades; the second's attention is fixed on Allah only

It is this man who is praised in this verse - he strives hard for Allah; thereupon Allah helps him and guides him on the way most suited to his ability and power; and thereafter keeps guiding him from one way to another until He exclusively attaches .him to Himself

Fourth: The straight path is preserved in the ways of Allah - the ways that are of various grades and levels. Allah guides man to it; and the man is thus guided aright. As mentioned above, Allah may keep guiding a man from one way to the other which is .of a higher grade, and then to a third one still higher

The prayer in this verse, "Guide us to the straight path" (revealed on behalf of those whom Allah has already guided to His worship) points to this very fact. If we keep this point in view, there would be

no room for an objection like the following: The one who utters this prayer is already ?guided aright – how can he pray afresh for guidance

It would be an attempt to reobtain a thing which is already in hand, and it is just impossible. Also, the worshipper is already on the straight path – how can he pray to ?be guided again to the same path? Isn't it an impossibility

.But the explanation given by us clears away the mist of such objections

Another objection: Our Law is the most perfect and most comprehensive of all the laws sent by Allah since the dawn of humanity. Why should we ask from Allah to guide ?us to the path of those of the previous people upon whom He had bestowed favours

Reply: Admittedly, the Law brought by Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) is more perfect than any other one. But it does not necessarily mean that all those who follow this Law are more perfect than all those who followed the previous laws. An average follower of the law of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) cannot surpass Nuh or Ibrahim (a.s.) , although their .laws were sent long before the Islamic Law

It is one thing to accept and follow a law; it is quite another to get spiritual perfection by total submission – by perfectly moulding oneself in that law's pattern. A believer of previous nations who attained a high spiritual level, who became a mirror of divine attributes, is most certainly better than, and superior to, a follower of

this law who did not reach that state - even though the latter would be following the most perfect and comprehensive law, that is, the Law of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.).

Therefore, it is quite in order for a believer of lower grade (although he may follow a perfect law) to pray to Allah to help him reach the level of a believer of higher grade (although he might have followed a less perfect law)).

An exegete has replied to the above-mentioned objection in a way that is not free from defects. He has said: The religion of Allah is one, and that is Islam. The fundamental truths - the belief in One God, the Prophethood and the Day of Judgement and all that results from this belief - are the same in all the laws and revelations sent by Allah.

The Law of Islam has an added distinction, in that it covers all aspects of human life and is, thus, the most comprehensive one. It looks more properly after public welfare. Moreover, its foundation is laid on reasoning - in all its forms: The logic, the admonition and the goodly argumentation.

All divine religions are, thus, the same and the fundamental truths are common to all. The previous people have preceded us in this path. Therefore, Allah has ordered us to look into their affairs, to take lessons from them and to follow them to spiritual perfection.

The author says: The principle upon which this reply is based is against the principles that guide us in

exegesis of the Qur'an. The reply assumes that the realities of fundamental truths are on the same level in all the religions; that there is no difference in their grades; that .the spiritual perfections and religious virtues are of the same quality everywhere

According to this view, the highest ranking prophet is equal to the lowest type of believer in his existence and natural perfection - so far as his creation is concerned. The difference, if any, is based on the subjective outlook of sharī'ah, not on any .matter of creation

In their opinion, this case is similar to that of a king vis-a-vis his subjects - they are not different in their human existence, the difference is in their subjective and assumed positions only which are laid down by people and which do not have any independent .existence

This thinking, in its turn, is based on the theory of materialism, which teaches that nothing exists but matter; metaphysical "things" have no existence at all (or, at least, we are not in a position to know that they exist). The only exception is God, and we .believe in His existence because of logical evidence

Those who accepted this view did so because, coming under the influence of natural sciences, they put all their confidence in their five senses. Or because they thought that "commonsense" was enough for explaining the divine words, and therefore, ne... glected to meditate on the Qur'an. God willing, we shall throw more light on this .subject at some other place

Fifth: The

people of the straight path are higher in rank than others, and their path is superior to the others' ways. It is because of their knowledge, and not because of their virtuous deeds. They have that knowledge of divine attributes which is hidden from others. (We have explained earlier that perfection of virtuous deeds is found in some of the inferior ways also.

Therefore, deeds cannot be the criterion by which the people of the straight path are given excellence over the rest.) The question arises as to what is that knowledge and how it is acquired. We shall deal with these questions when we shall explain the verse ۱۳:۱۷

(He sends down water from the heaven, then the valleys flow according to their measure).

The following verses too point to this fact:

Allah will exalt those of you who believe, and those who are given knowledge in higher degrees (۵۸:۱۱);

To Him do ascend the good words; and the good deed lifts them up (۳۵:۱۰).

What ascends to Allah is the good words, that is, true belief and knowledge; good deeds lift up the good words and help them in their ascension, without themselves going up. We shall fully discuss this verse when we shall reach it.

Tradition

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said about the meaning of worship: "Worship is of three kinds: some people worship Allah, because they fear Him - so it is the worship of slaves; and a group worships Allah, Blessed and High is He, to seek reward - so it is the worship of

hirelings; and a group worships Allah, Mighty and Great is He, because of (His) love - (and this is the worship of noble persons, and it is the most excellent worship." (al-Kafi

Verily, some people worshipped Allah being desirous (of His reward) - so this is the worship of traders; and some people worshipped Allah fearing (His punishment) - so it is the worship of slaves, and a group worshipped Allah in gratitude (to Him) -so this is (the worship of noble men. (Nahju '١-baldghah

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "Verily people worship Allah in three ways: One group worships Him in desire of His reward, and it is the worship of covetous ones, and it is greed; and others worship Him in dread of the Fire, and it is the worship of slaves, and it is fear; but I worship Him in His love - Mighty and Great is He and this is the worship of noble .ones

:It is) because Allah has said)

;(and they shall be secure from terror on that days (٢٧:٨٩

,and He has said

.(Say: `If you love Allah, then follow me, Allah will love you. . .' (٣:٣١

Therefore, whosoever is loved by Allah, he shall be among the secure ones; and it is a hidden position, cannot touch it save the purified ones." (al-`Ilal, al-Majalis and al-(Khisal

The author says: The meaning of these Tradition may be understood from the preceding Commentary. The Imams (of Ahlu '١-bayt) have variously attributed the worship of the noble ones sometimes to gratitude and sometimes

to love, because in final analysis both are one and the same. Gratitude and .thankfulness means putting the received bounty in its proper place

It is the thankfulness for worship that should be addressed to Allah, as only He, Himself, deserves to be worshipped. Allah is worshipped because He is Allah, that is, because He alone holds all attributes of beauty and glory. He, of all things, is Beautiful; He alone is loved for Himself. What is love? It is inclination and attraction towards .beauty

We say: He is worshipped because He is He; we may express the same idea if we say: He is worshipped because He is beautiful and beloved. Again, the same theme may be explained by saying that He is worshipped because He is the Bestower of favours and .is thanked through worship. All three expressions carry the same import

It has been narrated through Sunni chains that as-Sadiq (a.s.) explained the verse, “Thee do we worship . . .” in these words: “We do not ask from Thee other than Thee, and we do not worship Thee by substitute and replacement, as do those who are ”.ignorant of Thee, removed from Thee

The author says: This tradition points to what has been explained in the Commentary that worship demands presence (of heart) and purity (of intention) which does not .allow diversion to any substitute, to anything else

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said inter alia in a tradition: “And whosoever thinks that he worships ,(Allah) by (His) attributes without being conscious of Him

he refers (his worship) to an absent one; and whosoever thinks that he worships the attribute and the person (having that attribute) he nullifies monotheism, because the attribute is other than the person; and whosoever thinks that he ascribes the person to the attribute, he belittles the Great One, and they do not assign to Allah His proper (prestige . . .' " (Tuhafu '۱-'uqūl

as-Sadiq (a.s.) explained the verse: Guide us to the straight path, in these words: "Guide us to adhere to the path that leads to Thy love, and conveys to Thy Garden, (the path that) prevents us from following our desires (lest we be ruined) and from (adhering to our opinions (lest we be destroyed). (Ma`ani 'l-akhadr

The same book quotes `Ali (a.s.) as saying about this verse: "Continue for us Thy help with which we obeyed Thee in our past days, so that we continue to obey Thee in our ".coming days also

The author says: The two Tradition point to two aspects of the reply of the previously mentioned objection - that the prayer for guidance, addressed by a person already guided aright, is trying to obtain a thing in hand, and that it was asking for impossible. The first tradition looks at the difference in the grades of guidance, and the second .looks at oneness of guidance in its reality

Again Ma'ani 'l-akhbar quotes 'Ali (a.s.) as saying: "The straight path, in this world, is that which stops short of excesses and rises above shortcomings, and remains

straight; and, in the next world, it is the path of the believers (leading them) to the ".Garden

The same book quotes the same Imam, explaining the verse: The path of those. . ., as follows: "Say: Guide us to the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours by strengthening them for Thy religion and Thy obedience - not (of those whom Thou favoured) with wealth and health because such things are sometimes given even to ".the disbelievers or to the sinful

Then he said:) "And those (bestowed with divine favour) are those about whom Allah) :says

And whoever obeys Allah and the Apostle, these are with those upon whom Allah has bestowed favours from among the prophets and the truthful and the martyrs and the .(righteous ones, and excellent are these as companions (۴:۶۹

ar-Rida (a.s.) narrates through his forefathers from Amir al-mu'minin (a.s.) that he said: "I heard the Apostle of Allah saying: 'Allah, Mighty and Great is He, has said: "I have divided the Opening of the Book between Myself and My servant; so, its half is for Me and the (other) half is for My servant. And My servant shall get what he asks ".for

When the servant says: In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful, Allah, Great is His Glory, says: "My servant has started with My name, and it is incumbent upon Me ".that I should complete his works for him and bless him in his affairs

And when he says: All praise is due

to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, Allah, Great is His Glory, says: "My servant has praised Me, and he knows that the bounties that are with him are from Me, and that the misfortunes that have been averted from him were so averted by My grace; (O My angels!) I appoint you as My witnesses that I shall add for him the favours of the next world to those of this world, and will avert from him the calamities of the next world as ".I have averted from him the calamities of this world

And when he says, The Beneficent, the Merciful, Allah, Great is His Glory, says: "My servant bore witness for Me that I am the Beneficent, the Merciful; I make you My witness that I will most surely augment his share in My mercy, and I will most ".certainly increase his portion in My bounties

And when he says, The Master of the Day of Judgement, Allah, the High, says: "I make you My witness that, as he has acknowledged that I am the Master of the Day of Judgement, I will most certainly make his reckoning easier (for him) on the Day of ".Reckoning, and I will most certainly accept his good deeds, and look over his sins

And when he says: Thee do we worship, Allah, Mighty and Great is He, says: "My servant is telling truth, He worships Me only. Be My witness that I will most surely give him for his worship a reward that

".will be the (object of) envy to all who opposed him when he worshipped Me

And when he says, and Thee do we beseech for help, Allah, the High, says: "From Me has My servant sought help, and in Me has he taken refuge. Be My witness that I will most certainly help him in his affairs, and will aid him in his difficulties, and will take his ".hand in his calamities

And when he says, Guide us to the right path . . ., Allah, Mighty and Great is He, says: "This (part) is for My servant, and My servant shall have what he asks for; and I have answered (the prayer of) My servant, and have given him what he hopes for and have .(protected him from what he is afraid of." ' " (`Uyūnu 'l-akhbar

The author says: as-Sadūq has narrated in `Ilalu 'sh-shara'i `, an almost similar tradition from ar-Rida (a.s.). The tradition explains the chapter of The Opening in the .frame of the daily prayer

It further confirms the previously mentioned fact that this divine revelation has been sent, as though on behalf of the servants of Allah, to teach them the manners of servitude; to show them how to praise their Lord and how to declare their allegiance to Him. It is a chapter made especially for the purpose of worship; and no other :chapter comes near to it in this respect. For example

The entire chapter is a divine speech, revealed on behalf of His servant, so .۱

.that he may recite it when he stands to worship his Lord

.It is divided in two parts: one for Allah and the other for the servant .۲

It contains, in spite of its brevity, all the Qur'anic wisdom. The Qur'an is a vast .۳ treasure of fundamental truths, moral values and the most comprehensive sharī `ah which consists of the rules of worship and mutual dealings, as well as the penal and civil codes. Further it is a valuable mine of divine promises and threats, stories of .previous peoples as well as parables and moral lessons

But, in spite of this wide scope, all its teachings may be returned to four fundamental truths: the Oneness of God, the prophethood, the resurrection (with all its details) and the guidance of mankind to its bliss in this world as well as in the next. Needless to reiterate that this chapter contains all these basic realities in these very short, and at .the same time very eloquent, sentence

It will not be out of place to compare the beauty, glory and spirituality of this chapter, used in the Muslims' prayers, with the Lord's prayer, used by the Christians in their :prayer

.Our Father which art in heaven Hallowed be thy name

.Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven

.Give us this day our daily bread

.And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors

:And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and

,the glory

(for ever. Amen. (Matthews ۶:۹ -۱۳

Ponder deeply on the teachings contained in these sentences, supposed to be of divine revelation, and see what manners of servitude does this prayer teach. First it tells them that their Father (i.e. God, in their terminology) is in heaven. Then it prays about the Father that His name be hallowed, His kingdom come and His will be done in .earth as it is in heaven

The question is: Who will fulfill these wishes which look more like political slogans than spiritual invocation. Then it makes them ask for their daily bread, and for His forgiveness in lieu of their forgiveness - that He should waive His rights as they have waived theirs. But what right do they possess except that which they have been given ?by God Himself

Then they beseech Him not to lead them into temptation but to deliver them from evil. This is asking for im possible, because this world is the place appointed for our test and trial, so that we may acquire spiritual perfection. Would not salvation lose its ?meaning, if there was no test and trial

And yet some orientalists have temerity to write: "Islam does not have any superiority over other religions, so far as spiritual knowledge is concerned, because all divine religions invite the men to the belief in one God, and ask them to purify themselves by good character and virtuous deeds. The religions excel one another only in deep-".rootedness of their social fruits

It is

narrated in Man la yahduruhu '۱-faqīh and at-Tafsīr of al-`Ayyashi that as-Sadiq (a.s.) ".(.said: "The straight path is Amīru'l-mu'minīn (a.s

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "(The straight path) is the path to the knowledge of Allah. And there are two paths, one in this world and the other in the next. As for the path in this world, it is the Imam whose obedience is obligatory; whosoever knows him in this world and follows his guidance, he shall proceed on the path which is the bridge over the hell in the next world; and whosoever does not know him in this world, his foot shall slip (over that bridge) in the next world, and he shall fall down into the fire of the (hell." (Ma`ani '۱-akhbar

The same book quotes as-Sajjad (a.s.) as saying: "There is no curtain between Allah and His proof, nor is there any screen for Allah against His proof. We are the gates of Allah, and we are the straight path, and we are the (treasure) chest of His Knowledge, and we are the interpreters of His revelation, and we are the pillars of His Oneness, ".and we are the place of His secret

Ibn Shahrashūb has quoted from at-Tafsīr of Wakī 'ibn al-Jarrah from ath-Thawrī from as-Suddī from Asbat and Mujahid from Ibn `Abbas that he said about the verse: Guide us to the straight path: "Say O group of the servants (of Allah): Lead us to the ".love of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and his family members

The author says: There are

other Tradition of the same meaning. Such Tradition are based on the “flow” of the Qur'an, that is, application of the Qur'an wherever it is applicable. It should be noted that the term, “flow” - and it will often be used in this book - has been taken from the :(.Tradition of the Imams of Ahlu 'I-bayt (a.s

al-Fudayl ibn Yasar said: “I asked Abu Ja'far (a.s.) about the tradition, `There is no verse in the Qur'an but it has an exterior and an interior, and there is no word in it but it has a boundary, and every boundary has a watching place.' (I asked him) what was .the meaning of exterior and interior

The Imam said: `Its exterior is its revelation and its interior is its interpretation; some of it has already passed (i. e. happened) and some of it has not come about yet; it runs along (or flows) as run the sun and the moon; when a thing of it comes (to its (appointed place and time) it happens . . . (at-Tafsīr, of al -`Ayyashī

This theme is found in other Tradition too. It is the convention of the Imams of Ahlu 'I-bayt (a.s.) that they apply a Qur'anic verse to all things it may be applied to. And this convention was correct and reasonable, because the Qur'an was revealed as a “guidance to the worlds”; it guides the mankind to correct belief, correct ethics and correct action. The matter of belief that it has explained is eternal

.truth; it is not limited to a certain time or certain place

The virtue or vice and the rules laid down for them are not confined to one person or one period – they are general and applicable to all relevant persons and times. The Tradition explaining the background of revelation of a certain verse – when, why and .about whom or what was it revealed – do not affect its general import

The rule is not restricted to that particular person or event; otherwise, it would cease to be valid in other similar conditions, and would die with the death of that person. The Qur'anic declaration is general. If it praises some persons, or condemns some others, .it is because of the presence of good or evil characteristics in them

And wherever those good or evil characteristics are found, even in later generations, :the verse will in all truth be applied to them. The Qur'an itself proves it, as Allah says

With it (i.e., the Qur'an) Allah guides him who follows His pleasure into the ways of ;(safety . . . (۵:۱۶

and most surely it is a Mighty Book, falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor . . . ; (from behind it (۴۱:۴۱-۴۲

. (Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its guardian (۱۵:۹

There are numerous Tradition, perhaps reaching to hundreds, which apply various verses of the Qur'an to the Imams or to their enemies. They are called the Tradition of "flow". But now that

the general principle has been explained, we shall not include those Tradition in this book – except where it becomes necessary for the explanation of a verse or for some .reasoning or discussion

Suratul Baqarah, The Chapter of The Cow ۲:۱–۵

point

verses – Medina ۲۸۶

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

(۱) الم

(۲) ذَلِکَ الْکِتَابُ لاَ رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

(۳) الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ

(۴) وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْکَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلِکَ وَبِالآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ

(۵) أُوْلَئِکَ عَلَى هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِکَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

.In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

.(Alif Lam mīm (۱

,(This Book, there is no doubt in it, (is) a guidance to those who guard (against evil) (۲

Those who believe in the unseen and keep up the prayer and spend (benevolently) ,(out of what We have given them (۳

And who believe in that which has been sent down to thee and that which was sent .(down before thee and they are sure of the hereafter (۴

These are on a guidance from their Lord and these it is that shall be the successful .(ones (۵

General Comment

This chapter was revealed piecemeal; therefore, it does not have a single theme. However a major part of it shows a general objective: It emphasizes that a man cannot be a true servant of Allah unless he believes in all that was revealed to the apostles of Allah without making any difference between revelation and revelation, or between apostle and apostle; accordingly, it admonishes and condemns the disbelievers, the hypocrites and the people of the book because they differed about

the religion of Allah and differentiated between His apostles; thereafter it ordains various important laws, like change of the direction to which the Muslims were to turn .for their prayers, regulations of hajj, inheritance and fasting and so on

Commentary

Qur'an: Alif lam mīm: God willing, we shall describe in the ۴۲nd chapter some things related to the "letter-symbols" that come at the beginning of some chapters. Also, the meaning of the guidance of the Qur'an and of its being a book will be explained later .on

Qur'an: This Book, there is no doubt in it, (is) guidance to those who guard (against evil), those who believe in the unseen: Those who guard against evil, or in other words, the pious ones, are the very people who believe. Piety, or guarding oneself .against evil, is not a special virtue of any particular group of the believers

It is not like doing good, being humble before God or purity of intention, which are counted as various grades of the faith. Piety, on the other hand, is a comprehensive virtue that runs through all the ranks of the true faith. It is for this reason that Allah .has not reserved this adjective for any particular group of the believers

The characteristics of piety, enumerated in these four verses, are five: Believing in the unseen, keeping up prayers, spending benevolently out of what Allah has given, believing in what Allah has revealed to His apostles, and being sure of the hereafter. The pious ones acquire these spiritual qualities

by guidance from Allah, as Allah tells us in the next verse: “These are on a guidance .” from their Lord

They became pious and guarded themselves against evil because Allah had guided them to it. When they got that quality, the Qur'an became guidance for them: “This Book . . . (is) a guidance to those who guard against evil”. It clearly shows that there are two guidances, one before they became pious, the other after it. The first guidance made them pious; and thereupon Allah raised their status by the guidance .of His Book

The contrast is thus made clear between the pious ones on one hand and the disbelievers and the hypocrites (who are admonished in the next fifteen verses) on the other. The later two groups are surrounded by two strayings and two blindnesses. Their first straying causes their unbelief and hypocrisy, and the second one (which .comes after their unbelief and hypocrisy) confirms their first error and strengthens it

:Look at what Allah says about the disbelievers

Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing; and there is a covering . (over their eyes (۲:۷

Sealing their hearts has been ascribed to Allah, but the covering over their eyes was :put by the disbelievers themselves. Likewise, Allah says about the hypocrites

.(There is a disease in their hearts, so Allah added to their disease (۲:۱۰

The first disease is attributed to the hypocrites themselves, and the second one to Allah. The same reality has been explained in many

:verses. For example

He causes many to err by it and many He leads aright by it! But He does not cause to ;(err by it (any) except the transgressors (۲:۲۶

.(but when they turned aside, Allah made their hearts turn aside (۶۱:۵ . . .

In short, the pious ones are surrounded by two guidances, as the disbelievers and hypocrites fall between two errors. The second guidance is by the Qur'an; therefore, the first one must have been before the Qur'an. They must have been guided by a healthy and unimpaired psychology. If a man's nature is faultless and flawless, it .cannot fail to see that it is dependent on something above it

Also, it realizes that every other thing, which it may perceive, imagine or understand, depends likewise or, a thing outside the chain of dependent and needy things. Thus, it comes to believe that there must be a Being, unseen and imperceptible through the .senses, who is the beginning and end of every other thing

It also sees that the said Essential Being does not neglect even the smallest detail when it comes to creative perfection of His creatures. This makes him realize that the said Creator cannot leave the man to wander aimlessly hither and thither in his life; that He must have provided for him a guidance to lead him aright in his actions and .morals

By this healthy reasoning, the man acquires the belief in One God, in the institution of prophethood and in the Day of Resurrection. In this

way, his faith in the fundamentals of religion becomes complete. That faith leads him to show his servitude before his Lord, and to use all that is in his power – wealth, prestige, knowledge, power, and any other excellence – to keep this faith alive and to .convey it to others

Thus we come to the prayer and benevolent spending. The five virtues enumerated in these verses are such that a healthy nature unfailingly leads the man to them. Once a man reaches this stage, Allah bestows on him His other grace, that is, the guidance by .the Qur'an

The above-mentioned five qualities – correct belief and correct deeds – fall between two guidances, a preceding one and a following one. This second guidance is based on .the first one

: This fact has been described in the following verses

Allah confirms those who believe with the sure word in this world's life and in the .(hereafter (۱۴:۲۷

O you who believe! fear Allah and believe in His apostle. He will give you two portions .(of His mercy, and make for you a light with which you will walk . . . (۵۷:۲۸

.(O you who believe! if you help Allah, He will help you and make firm your feet (۴۷:۷

. (And Allah does not guide the unjust people (۶۱:۷

.(and Allah does not guide the transgressing people (۶۱:۵ . . .

The same is the case with error and straying of the disbelievers and hypocrites, as will .be seen later on

The above verses give an indication that

man has another life, hidden behind this one. It is by that life that he lives in this world :as well as after death and at resurrection. Allah says

Is he who was dead then We raised him to life and made for him a light by which he walks among the people, like him whose likeness is that of one in utter darkness .(whence he cannot come forth . . . (۶:۱۲۲

.We shall explain it, God willing, later on

faith, to believe) is consolidation = الایمان) "Those who believe in the unseen" "al- Īman safety, to feel safe). The believer, by = الأمن) of belief in heart. It is derived from al-amn his belief and faith, gains safety from doubts. (Needless to say that doubt is like a (.poison to the faith

It has already been explained that faith has many grades. Sometimes one is certain of the object of faith; and this certainty has its effects; at other times the certainty increases and includes some concomitants of the said object; and at times it .increases to include all the related matters of the object of faith

"Naturally, the belief, thus, is of various grades and so are the believers. "al-Ghayb the unseen) is opposite of "the perceived". It is used for Allah, and His great = الغَیْب) signs, including the revelation, which is referred to in the clause, "And who believe in ."that which has been sent down to thee and that which was sent down before thee

.Also, it includes the hereafter

But in these verses, the beliefs in the revelation and in the hereafter have been separately mentioned. Therefore, “the unseen” must have been used for Allah only. In .this way the belief in the three fundamentals of religion becomes complete

The Qur'an emphasizes that man should not confine his knowledge and belief to only .the perception; it exhorts him to follow healthy reasoning and rational understanding

Qur’an: and they are sure of the hereafter: Instead of only believing in the hereafter, they are sure of it. There is an indication here that one cannot be pious, cannot guard himself against evil, until he is really certain of the hereafter - a certainty that does not let him forget it even for a short time. A man believes in a matter, yet sometimes .forgets some of its demands and then commits something contrary

But if he believes in, and is sure of, the day when he shall have to give account of all that he has done -big or small - he will not do anything against the divine law, will not :commit any sin. Allah says

and do not follow desire, lest it should lead you astray from the path of Allah; (as . . . for) those who go astray from the path of Allah, for them surely is a severe .(punishment because they forgot the day of reckoning (۳۸:۲۶

Clearly it is because of forgetting the Day of Reckoning that man goes astray. It follows that if one remembers it and is sure

.of it, he will surely guard himself against evil, will become pious

Qur’an: These are on guidance from their Lord and these it is that shall be the successful ones: Guidance is always from Allah, it is not ascribed to anyone else .except in a metaphorical way

:Allah describes His guidance in these words

Therefore (for) whomsoever Allah intends that He would guide him aright; He .(expands his breast for Islam . . . (۶:۱۲۵

.If one's breast is expanded, he will be free from every tightness and niggardliness

:And Allah says that

whoever is preserved from the niggardliness of his soul, these it is that are the . . . .(successful ones (۵۹:۹

Therefore, He says in this verse about those who are on His guidance that “they shall .”be the successful ones

Tradition

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allah: Those who believe in the unseen: “Those one who stands, i.e., al-Mahdi, the twelfth = القائِم) who believe in the rising of al- Qa'im (Imam - a. s.) that it is truth.” (Ma'ani '۱-akhbar

The author says: This explanation is given in other Tradition also; and it is based on .the “flow” of the Qur'an

According to at-Tafsīr of al-`Ayyashi, as-Sadiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allah: and spend (benevolently) out of what We have given them, that it means: the .knowledge We have given them

In Ma`ani 'l-akhbar, the same Imam has explained it in these words: “And they spread the knowledge We have given them and they recite what We have taught them of

.the Qur'an

The author says: Both Tradition explain the “spending” in a wider sense that includes spending the wealth as well as using other bounties of Allah in His cause; the .explanation given by us earlier is based on this exegesis

A Philosophical Discussion

Should we rely on rational concepts, in addition to the things perceptible through the senses? It is a subject of great controversy among the western scholars of the later days. All Muslim philosophers as well as most of the western ones of ancient times .believed that we can rely on the rational as well as the sensual perceptions

They were rather of the opinion that an academic premises does not look at a tangible and sensual factor as such. But most of the modern scholars, especially the scientists, hold that nothing can be relied upon except what one perceives through :the five senses. Their proof is as follows

Pure rational proofs often go wrong. There is no test or experiment, perceptible .through the senses, to verify those rational proofs or their premises

Sensual perceptions are free from this defect; when we perceive a thing through a sense, we verify it through repeated tests and experiments; this testing continues till .we are sure of the characteristics or properties of the object of test

.Therefore, sensual perception is free from doubt, while rational proof is not

:But this argument has many flaws

First: All the above-mentioned premises are rational; they cannot be perceived by any of the five senses. In other words, these scholars are using rational premises, to

prove that rational premises cannot be relied upon! What a paradox! If they succeed in proving their view-point through these premises, their very success would prove .them wrong

Second: Sensual perception is not less prone to error and mistake than rational proof. A cursory glance at the books dealing with the optics and other such subjects is enough to show how many errors are made by sight, hearing and other senses. If rational proof is unreliable because of its possible mistakes, sensual perception also .should be discarded for the same reason

Third: No doubt, there should be a way to distinguish the right perception from the wrong. But it is not the "repeated testing", per se, that creates that distinction in our mind. Rather, it becomes one of the premises of a rational proof which in turn .provides that distinction

When we discover a property of an object, and the property remains the same through repeated tests, a rational proof, on the following lines, is offered by our think... ing power. If this property were not this thing's own property, it would not be found in it so unfailingly; But it is always found in it without fail; Therefore, it is its own property. It is now obvious that sensual perception too depends on rational premises .to finalize its findings

Fourth: Let us admit that practically every sensual perception is supported by test. But is that test verified by another test? If yes, then the same question will arise about this later one. Obviously, it

cannot go on adinfinitum; there must come at the end a test whose verification depends not on a visible test but on the above-mentioned rational proof. It means .that one cannot rely on sensual perception without relying on rational concepts

Fifth: The five senses cannot perceive absolute and major issues; they know only the particular and minor things. Knowledge depends on absolute issues, which cannot be .tested in a laboratory nor can they be grasped by the five senses

A professor of anatomy operates upon, or dissects, a number of living or dead human bodies - it does not matter how large or small that number is. He finds that each of the .bodies - which he has opened - has a heart, a liver and the like

And after looking at those particular cases, he feels bold enough to teach an absolute proposition that all men have a heart and a liver. The question is: Has he seen inside "all" the human beings? If only that much can be relied upon which is perceived by the five senses, how can any absolute proposition of any branch of science be accepted ?as true

The fact is that sensual perception and rational concept both have their place in the field of knowledge; both are complementary to each other. By rationality and understanding, we mean that faculty which is the source of the above examples of .absolute principles

Everyone knows that man has such a faculty. How can a faculty created by Allah (or ,as they say

by nature) be always in wrong? How can it always fail in the function entrusted to it by the Creator? The Creator never entrusts any work to an agent until He creates a .connecting link between them

So far as mistakes in rational and sensual faculties are concerned, the reader should .look for it in related subjects like logic etc

Another Philosophical Discussion

point

Man in his early childhood perceives the objects around him; he knows them without knowing that he knows, that is, without being aware that he has, or is using, a faculty called knowledge or cognition. This continues until a time comes when he finds himself doubting or presuming a thing. Then he realizes that before that he was using ."knowledge" in his life affairs

He also gradually comes to understand that his perception or concepts are sometimes wrong, that error cannot be in the materials that he perceives – because those material things are facts and facts cannot be non-facts, that is, cannot be wrong. Therefore, the error must be in his perception. When there is no error in .perception, it is knowledge – a perception that leaves no room for opposite ideas

By these stages, he becomes aware of the basic principle that positive and negative are mutually exclusive and totally exhaustive; they are contradictories, they cannot .both be present nor can both be absent

This fundamental truth is the foundation-stone of every self-evident or theoretical proposition. (Even if one doubts this statement, he intuitively knows that this "doubt" cannot be present with its

(."negative, with its "nondoubt

Man relies on knowledge in every academic theory and practical function. Even when he feels doubtful about a matter, he identifies that doubt by knowing that it is a doubt. The same applies when he does not know, or only presumes, or merely imagines a thing, he identifies it by the knowledge that it is ignorance, presumption or .imagination

But in ancient Greece, there arose a group, the Sophists, who denied existence of knowledge. They showed doubt in everything, even in their own selves, even in that doubt. The Skeptics of later days are almost their successors. They deny knowledge of everything outside their own selves and their own minds. Their "arguments" run as :follows

First: The most potent knowledge (that comes through the five senses) is often wrong and in error. Then how can one be sure of the knowledge obtained through other sources? How can we rely, in this background, on any knowledge or proposition ?outside our own selves

Second: When we wish to comprehend any outside object, what we get is merely its knowledge; we do not grasp the object itself. Then, how can it be possible to grasp ?any object

Reply to the First Argument

First: This argument negates and annihilates itself. If no proposition can be relied ?upon, how can one rely on the propositions and premises used in this argument

Second: To say that a source of knowledge is "often" wrong is to admit that it is also ?correct many times. Then how can it be rejected totally

Third: We have never

said that our knowledge is always correct. The Sophists and the Sceptics affirm that no knowledge is correct. To refute this universal negative proposition, a particular affirmative proposition is sufficient. That is, we have only to prove that some knowledge is correct; and we have done so in the second reply.

Reply to the Second Argument

The issue in dispute is knowledge, which means to unveil an object. The Sceptics admit that when they try to comprehend an object, they get its knowledge. Their only complaint is that they do not grasp the object itself.

But nobody has ever claimed that knowledge means grasping the object itself; our only claim is that knowledge unveils some of the realities of its object, that is, of the thing so known.

Moreover, the Sceptic refutes his own views practically in every movement and at every moment. He claims that he does not know anything outside his own self, outside his own mind. But when he is hungry or thirsty, he moves to the food or water; when he sees a wall falling down, he runs away from it.

But he does not try to get food when he just thinks about hunger, and does not run away when he just thinks about a falling wall. It means that he does not act on the pictures in his mind – which he claims are the real things, and acts on that feeling or perception which comes to him from outside – which, according to him, does not have any reality and should not

!be relied upon

There is another objection against existence of knowledge. They deny existence of established knowledge; and have laid the foundation of today's natural sciences on :this rejection. Their reasoning is as follows

Every single atom in this world is in constant movement; every single thing is continuously moving towards perfection or deterioration. In other words, what a thing was at a given instant, is not the same in the next. Understanding and perception is a .function of brain. Therefore, it is a material property of a material compound

Naturally, this process too is governed by the laws of change and development. It means that all functions of brain, including knowledge, are constantly changing and developing. It is, therefore, wrong to say that there is any such thing as established knowledge. Whatever knowledge there is has only relative permanence - some propositions last longer than others. And it is this impermanent conception that is .called knowledge

Reply: This argument is based on the presumption that knowledge is not non-material and abstract; that it is a physical thing. But this supposition is neither self-evident nor proved. Knowledge is certainly non-material and abstract. It is not a physical and :material thing, because the attributes and properties of matter are not found in it

.All material things are divisible; knowledge, per se, is not divisible .۱

Material things depend on space and time; knowledge, per se, is independent of .۲ space and time. An event happens in a certain place and time, but we may comprehend it in

.any place and at any time without any adverse effect on its comprehension

Material things are admittedly governed by the law of general movement and .۳ constant change. But knowledge, per se, does not change. Knowledge, as knowledge, .is incompatible with change, as one may understand after a little meditation

Suppose that knowledge, per se, is subject to constant change like matter and .۴ material things. Then one thing or event could not be comprehended with the same details, in exactly the same way, at two different times. Nor could a past event be remembered correctly later on. Because, as the materialists have said, "what a ."(material) thing was at a given instant is not the same in the next

These comparisons show that knowledge, as knowledge, is not a material or physical thing. It must be told here that we are not talking about the physical actions and reactions which an organ of a sense or the brain has to undergo in the process of acquiring knowledge. That action and reaction is a process, or a tool, of knowledge, it .is not the knowledge itself

.For more detailed discussion of this subject one should study the philosophical works

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۶-۷

point

(۶) إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَأَنذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ

(۷) خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَى أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

Surely those who disbelieve, alike is it to them whether you warn them or do not warn .(them, they will not believe (۶

Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and

upon their hearing; and there is a covering over their eyes; and for them is a great .(punishment (٧

Commentary

Qur'an: Surely those who disbelieve. . . will not believe: They were the people who obstinately clung to rejection of faith and in whose hearts disbelief had established deep roots. This may be inferred from the fact that warning them and not warning .them was all alike to them; they would not move from their obduracy

Probably it refers to the disbelievers of Quraysh, who were the bitterest enemies of Islam and who did try their utmost to extinguish the light of faith; they persisted .stubbornly in their enmity until Allah destroyed them in Badr and other battles

The sentence, "alike is it to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe", strengthens this interpretation; because it could not be applied to all the disbelievers of the world – otherwise the door of guidance would be closed. Also, .this same sentence has come in Chapter of Yasin (٣۶:١٠) which is a Meccan chapter

Then it appears in this chapter that is the first chapter revealed at Medina. (It was revealed before the battle of Badr.) Therefore, more probably this verse also refers to the same Meccan group. In other places too the same explanation may be given to .the word, "those who disbelieve", unless there is a reason to the contrary

Likewise, wherever the word, "those who believe", has been used in the Qur'an it refers to the first

and early Muslims – unless there is any reason to believe otherwise. .This style of .address was reserved for them as a protocol of honour

Qur'an: Allah has set a seal. . . great punishment: Allah has ascribed the sealing to His own action, but the covering over their eyes is attributed to their own selves. It shows that they had put a curtain on their souls against the light of truth – it was their own .choice

Then, after their sins and disbelief, Allah put another curtain or seal over their souls. Their disbelief and misdeeds thus fall between two curtains – the first from them... .selves, the second from Allah

;Its further explanation will be given under ۲:۲۶

Surely Allah is not ashamed to set forth any parable – that of a gnat or anything above . . . that

Disbelief, like belief, has various degrees and ranks; and its effects also vary, like .those of belief

Tradition

Az-Zubayri says that he said to as-Sadiq (a.s.): "Tell me how many ways ofal-kufr (الکفر = disbelief, infidelity, to cover) are there according to the Book of Allah? Mighty and Great is He! He (the Imam) said: `Disbelief, according to the Book of Allah, is of five types. There is the disbelief of denial (and denial is of two kinds), and the disbelief by .neglecting what Allah has ordered, and the disbelief of disavowal, and the ingratitude

:As for the disbelief of denial, it is denial of the Lordship; it is the talk of those who say

there is no Lord (i.e. Creator), nor any Garden nor Fire". It is the word of two groups" :of disbelievers who are called atheists. And they are those who say

.(Nothing destroys us but time" (۴۵:۲۴"

It is a religion invented by them as it seemed good to them, but they have no proof to support their view. That is why Allah has said (about them): And they have no knowledge of that; they only conjecture (ibid.) that it is in reality as they say. And He :also said

Surely those who disbelieve, alike is it to them whether you warn them or do not warn (them, they will not believe.' "(al-Kafi

And as for the second kind, it is the denial after knowing; it means that the denier denies (the existence of God), but he knows (very well) that He is the truth, and he is .(convinced of it (in his heart

:(And Allah has said (about such people

And they denied them unjustly and proudly while their soul had been convinced of ;(them (۲۷:۱۴

and aforetime they used to pray for victory against those who disbelieved, but . . . when there came to them that which they did recognize (i.e. the Prophet) they dis... .(believed in him; so Allah's curse is on the unbelievers (۲:۸۹

.So this is the explanation of the two kinds of denial

And the third way of disbelief is ingratitude to the bounties (of Allah); and it is as Allah :says quoting (the Prophet) Sulayman

This is of the grace of my Lord that"

He may try me whether I am grateful or ungrateful; and whoever is grateful, he is grateful only for his own self, and whoever is ungrateful, then surely my Lord is Self-sufficient, Honoured " (۲۷:۴۰);

If you are grateful, I would certainly give you more, and if you are ungrateful, My chastisement is truly severe (۱۴:۷).

Therefore remember Me, I will remember you, and be thankful to Me, and do not be ungrateful to Me (۲:۱۵۲).

In all these verses Allah has used the word al-kufr = disbelief, to denote) ungratefulness, and ingratitude.)

And the fourth way of disbelief is leaving out or neglecting what Allah has ordered to do. It is as Allah says:

And when We made a covenant with you: You shall not shed your blood and you shall not turn your people out of your cities; then you gave a promise while you witnessed. Yet you it is who slay your people and turn a party from among you out of their homes, backing each other up against them unlawfully and exceeding the limits; and if they should come to you as captives, you would ransom them - while their very turning out was unlawful for you. Do you then believe in a part of the book and disbelieve in the other? (۲:۸۴-۸۵).

In this verse Allah has charged them with disbelief because they did not follow the commandment of Allah; (it should be noted that) Allah has (in this very verse) linked them to belief, yet He did not accept it

.from them and it did not benefit them before Allah

:So Allah (further) said

What then is the reward of such among you as do this but disgrace in the life of this world, and on the day of resurrection they shall be sent back to the most grievous (.chastisement, and Allah is not at all heedless of what you do(ibid

(.And the fifth way of disbelief is disavowal. It is as Allah says, quoting Ibrahim (a.s

we renounce you, and enmity and hatred have appeared between us and you for . . ."
,(ever until you believe in Allah alone" (۶۰:۴

.that is, we disavow and repudiate you

And He says, describing Iblīs and his disowning his friends from mankind on the Day of :Resurrection

.(surely I disbelieved in your associating me (with Allah) before" (۱۴:۲۲ . . ."

:And also He says

And he said: "You have only taken for yourselves idols besides Allah by way of friendship between you in the world's life, then on the resurrection day some of you ,(shall deny others, and some of you shall curse others . . . (۲۹:۲۵

.that is, some of you shall dissociate from others

The author says: This tradition confirms what we have previously mentioned that .disbelief has many grades and ranks

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۸–۲۰

point

(۸) وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَبِالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ وَمَا هُم بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

(۹) يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَمَا يَخْدَعُونَ إِلاَّ أَنفُسَهُم وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ

(١٠) فِى قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضاً وَلَهُم عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ

(١١) وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لاَ تُفْسِدُواْ فِى الأَرْضِ قَالُواْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ

(١٢)

p: ١٠٣

أَلا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَكِن لاَّ يَشْعُرُونَ

(۱۳) وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُواْ كَمَا آمَنَ النَّاسُ قَالُواْ أَنُؤْمِنُ كَمَا آمَنَ السُّفَهَاء أَلا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ السُّفَهَاء وَلَكِن لاَّ يَعْلَمُونَ

(۱۴) وَإِذَا لَقُواْ الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ قَالُواْ آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا إِلَى شَيَاطِينِهِمْ قَالُواْ إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِؤُونَ

(۱۵) اللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمُدُّهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ

(۱۶) أُوْلَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوُاْ الضَّلاَلَةَ بِالْهُدَى فَمَا رَبِحَت تِّجَارَتُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُواْ مُهْتَدِينَ

(۱۷) مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي اسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا فَلَمَّا أَضَاءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ ذَهَبَ اللَّهُ بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ لاَّ يُبْصِرُونَ

(۱۸) صُمٌّ بُكْمٌ عُمْيٌ فَهُمْ لاَ يَرْجِعُونَ

(۱۹) أَوْ كَصَيِّبٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاء فِيهِ ظُلُمَاتٌ وَرَعْدٌ وَبَرْقٌ يَجْعَلُونَ أَصْابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِم مِّنَ الصَّوَاعِقِ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ وَاللَّهُ مُحِيطٌ
بِالْكافِرِينَ

(۲۰) يَكَادُ الْبَرْقُ يَخْطَفُ أَبْصَارَهُمْ كُلَّمَا أَضَاء لَهُم مَّشَوْا فِيهِ وَإِذَا أَظْلَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُواْ وَلَوْ شَاء اللَّهُ لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَارِهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّه
عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

And there are some people who say: “We believe in Allah and in the last day”; while they are not at all believers (۸).

They desire to deceive Allah and those who believe, and they do not deceive except themselves and they do not perceive (۹).

There is a disease in their hearts, so Allah added to their disease and for them is a painful chastisement because of the lie they were saying (۱۰).

And when it is said to them, “Do not make mischief in the land”, they say: “We are but peace-makers” (۱۱).

Now surely they themselves are the mischief-makers, but they do not perceive (۱۲).

And when it is said to them: “Believe as the people have believed ”, they say: “Shall we believe as the

fools have believed?" Now surely they themselves are the fools, but they do not know .((۱۳

And when they meet those who believe, they say: "We believe "; and when they are .(alone with their Satans, they say: "Surely we are with you, we were only mocking" (۱۴

Allah pays them back their mockery, and leaves them alone in their rebellion blindly .(wandering on (۱۵

These are they who buy error for the guidance, so their bargain brings (them) no gain, .(nor are they guided aright (۱۶

Their parable is like the parable of one who kindled afire, but when it had illumined all around him, Allah took away their light, and left them in utter darkness - they do not .(see (۱۷

.(Deaf, dumb (and) blind, so they will not turn back (۱۸

Or like an abundant rain from the heaven in which is utter darkness and thunder and lightning; they put their fingers into their ears because of the thunder peals, for fear .(of death, and Allah encompasses the unbelievers (۱۹

The lightning almost takes away their sight; whenever it shines on them they walk in it, and when it becomes dark to them they stand still; and if Allah had pleased He would certainly have taken away their hearing and their sight; surely Allah has power . (over all things (۲۰

Commentary

These thirteen verses are about the hypocrites. We shall discuss this subject in detail .in Chapter ۶۳ (The Hypocrites) and in some other places

.is deceit, duplicity (الخُدعه) "Qur'an: They desire to deceive: "al-Khad'ah

Qur'an: When

means evil, wicked; that is why (الشيطان) "they are alone with their Satans: "ash-Shaytan .the Iblīs is called the Satan

Qur'an: Their parable is like the parable of one who kindled a fire . . . they will not return: The hypocrites are like a man who is surrounded by a blinding darkness in which he cannot distinguish good from bad, beneficial from harmful; to remove it he kindles a fire, and in its light is able to see to some distance around it; then as soon as it has illumined all around, Allah, extinguishes it by wind, rain or some other thing like it .and he is left as he was before - in utter darkness

And now he is pressed between two darknesses - that of the night and that of bewilderment and nullity of his endeavour. This parable fits exactly on hypocrites. A hypocrite declares himself to be a Muslim, and through it gains some benefits, as he is .treated as a Muslim in matters of marriage and inheritance etc

But as soon as death approaches - the time when the real and complete benefits of Islam should have appeared - Allah takes away the light, nullifies his deeds and leaves him in utter darkness in which he cannot see at all. Thus he falls between two .darknesses - his original one and the one he added with his dark deeds

= (الصَّيِّب) "Qur'an: Or like an abundant rain . . . Allah has power over all things: "as-Sayyib ;(abundant rain

thunder that is heard = الرّعـد) "lightning; flesh of lightning); "ad-ra'd = البـرق) "al- barq"
.(thunderbolt, to strike with lightning =الصّاعِقه) " after lightning); "as-sa `iqah

This is another example for the hypocrites. A man is caught in a rain pour; darkness surrounds him, he is unable to see around and loses his bearings. The rain tells him to run away; to find a shelter somewhere, but darkness prevents him from it; frightening thunder and lightning-bolts have overwhelmed him, yet when lightning appears he tries to take its advantage by walking ahead in its light - but it appears only for a fleeting moment and then disappears; whenever it shines he walks ahead .and when darkness I engulfs him again he stops

A hypocrite is exactly in the same position. He does not like Islam, but has to profess to be a Muslim. His words do not reach his heart; what he says is different from what he believes in his heart. Because of this discrepancy his path is not illuminated as it .should have been

The result is that he gropes about aimlessly and stumbles every now and then; he walks a little and then stops. Thus Allah punishes him with disgrace; and had He wished so, He would have taken away his sight and hearing, thereby disgracing him .on the very first day

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۲۱-۲۵

point

(۲۱) يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُواْ رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِى خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

(۲۲) الَّذِى جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الأَرْضَ فِرَاشاً وَالسَّمَاء بِنَاء وَأَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاء مَاء فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ

مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَكُمْ فَلاَ تَجْعَلُواْ لِلّهِ أَندَادًا وَأَنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

(۲۳) وَإِن كُنتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَى عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُواْ بِسُورَةٍ مِّن مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُواْ شُهَدَاءكُم مِّن دُونِ اللّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

(۲۴) فَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلُواْ وَلَن تَفْعَلُواْ فَاتَّقُواْ النَّارَ الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ

(۲۵) وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِين آمَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الأَنْهَارُ كُلَّمَا رُزِقُواْ مِنْهَا مِن ثَمَرَةٍ رِّزْقًا قَالُواْ هَـذَا الَّذِي
رُزِقْنَا مِن قَبْلُ وَأُتُواْ بِهِ مُتَشَابِهًا وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ وَهُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

O men! worship your Lord Who created you and those before you so that you may ; (guard (against evil) (۲۱

Who made the earth a bed (resting place) and the sky a structure; and (Who) sends down rain from the heaven, thereby brings forth with it subsistence for you of the .(fruits; therefore do not set up equals to Allah while you know (۲۲

And if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it and call on your witnesses besides Allah if you are truthful .((۲۳

But if you do (it) not - and never shall you do (it) - thenbe on guard against the fire of . (which men and stones are the fuel; it is prepared for the unbelievers (۲۴

And convey good news to those who believe and do good deeds that for them are gardens in which rivers flow; whenever they shall be given a portion of the fruit -;thereof, they shall say: “This is what was given to us before

and they shall be given the like of it, and they shall have pure mates in them; and in .(them they shall abide (٢٥

Commentary

Qur'an: O men! worship your Lord . . . may guard (against evil): The preceding nineteen verses have described the positions of the three groups category-wise: The pious ones who are on the guidance from their Lord; the disbelievers whose hearts and ears have been sealed and who have their eyes covered; and the hypocrites in whose hearts there is disease so Allah added to their disease and they are deaf, dumb and .blind

In this background, Allah calls the men to be His good servants, to worship Him and to join, not the disbelievers and the hypocrites, but the pious ones, those who guard themselves against evil. This context shows that the clause, "so that you may guard (against evil)", is governed by the verb "worship" - you should worship Allah to join those who guard against evil, who are pious. It may also be governed by the verb, ."created" - Allah created you in order that you may guard yourselves against evil

Qur'an: Who made the earth a bed . . . do not set up equals to Allah while you know: alike, equal, peer). The phrase, "while you = النِّد) is plural of an-nidd (الأنداد) ""al-Andad know", is unconditional, and grammatically it is circumstantial phrase of "do not set up"; these two factors lend extra-ordinary force to the prohibition of setting up equals .to Allah

The sentence

shows that a man who has even a little knowledge should not ascribe any equal or partner to Allah; he should know that it is Allah Who has created him and those before him and arranged and managed this system in the creation for their sustenance and .survival

Qur'an: And if you are in doubt . . . then produce a chapter like it . . . : It is a challenge which human beings and jinn can never meet. This challenge has been offered to demonstrate the miracle of the Qur'an, to show that it is a Book sent down by Allah, there is no doubt in it; that it has been revealed as an everlasting miracle that will remain alive till the end of the world. This challenge has repeatedly been given in the :Qur' an

Say: "If men and jinn should combine together to bring the like of this Qur'an, they could not bring the like of it, even though some of them were aiders of the others" .((۱۷:۸۸

Or, do they say: "He has forged it?" Say: "Then bring ten chapters like it forged and call .(upon whom you can besides Allah, if you are truthful" (۱۱:۱۳

This context shows that the pronoun "it" in "like it" refers to "that which We have revealed to Our servant", that is, the Qur'an. It is a challenge to them to bring a like of .the Qur'an in its inimitable style and meaning

translated here as "like = من مثلِهِ) "The word "min mithlihi

it") may also be rendered as "from like him". In that case it will be a challenge to bring .a like of the Qur'an written by someone like the Holy Prophet

This Qur'an has been brought by a person who was never taught by any teacher, who had not learnt these valuable and marvelous truths from any human being, nor had .he taken this most eloquent style from any mortal

If the disbelievers thought that such a man can write such a Book, then let them bring its like from some such illiterate man. In this light, the verse would have the same :import as the following one

Say: "If Allah had desired (otherwise) I would not have recited it to you, nor would He have taught it to you; indeed I have lived a lifetime among you before it; do you not (then understand?" (۱۰:۱۶

.Both explanations have been given in some Tradition

Obviously, this and the other challenging verses dare the antagonists to bring, if they can, like of even the shortest chapter of the Qur'an - say, the Chapter of al-Kawthar .or al- Asr

A strange exegesis has been written by someone that "like it " means like this Chapter, The Cow, in which this verse occurs. This explanation is totally devoid of good literary taste. Those who disbelieved in the Qur'an, rejected the whole Book as .being forged against Allah

What purpose could be served by challenging them to bring a Chapter like that of The Cow? Such a challenge would, in final

analysis, mean this: If you are in doubt the short Chapter of al-Kawthar or al- Ikhlds, then bring a like of the largest Chapter of The Cow. Absurd, isn't it!

Miracle And Its Quiddity

The claim of the Qur'an that it is a miraculous sign, and the challenge to the doubters offered by this verse, contains in reality two claims: First, that miracles, super-natural events, do occur; second, that the Qur'an is one of such miracles.

If the second claim is proved, the first will automatically be proved. That is why the Qur'an has challenged the men to bring its like, as it would prove both aspects of the claim.

How does a miracle happen? After all, it is against the deep-rooted system of the cause-and-effect which is never negated. The Qur'an explains this subject in the following two stages:

First: The miracle is a reality; the Qur'an is one of the miracles, which in itself proves the existence of miracles in general; it offers a challenge to its adversaries and in this way proves its truth.

Second: What is the reality of miracle? How can a thing happen in this world of nature against the universal law of the cause-and-effect?

The Miracle Of The Qur'an

Undoubtedly, the Qur'an has offered a continuing challenge, by which it proves itself to be a miracle. This challenge has been given in many verses of Meccan as well as Medinite period. All of them show that this Book is a divine miracle, a super-natural sign.

The verse under discussion, "And if you are in doubt as to that which

We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it . . . ", is one of those .challenges: Produce a chapter like one of the Qur'an from someone like the Prophet

It should be noted that it does not purport to prove the prophethood of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) directly; it does not say, `if you are in doubt as to the prophethood of Our, servant'; instead it says, `if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to Our .'servant

Likewise, all the challenges given in the Qur'an aim to prove that this Book is a super-natural sign from Allah. And when this fact is established, the prophethood of the .Prophet will automatically be proved

The verses of challenge vary in their scope and generality. The most general is the :verse

Say: ` If men and jinn should combine together to bring the like of this Qur'an, they could not bring the like of it, even though some of them were aiders of the others" .((۱۷:۸۸

The verse is of Meccan period, and it is easy to see that it contains an all-.encompassing challenge

This challenge is not confined to its unsurpassed eloquence and purest style. Otherwise, the challenge would not cover non-Arabs; it could be addressed to only those who spoke pure Arabic before it was debased by foreign influence - in other words, only to the Arabs of the days of paganism or to those whose life-span bridged the time of paganism and that of Islam. But the verse

.challenges not only the whole mankind but confronts the jinn also

As for other special qualities of the Qur'an (like the exposition of spiritual realities, the high morals, the most comprehensive and the fairest legal code, the information of the things unseen as well as other subjects which the man had not even thought of when the Qur'an was revealed), they are of such a nature that only a selected group - .and not the whole mankind - may appreciate them

But the challenge is general and covers elites and common men and jinn. It is clear in this light that it is not confined to any one quality; it defies them to bring a like of this .Book in all its qualities together

The Qur'an is a miracle: For a man of eloquence, in its spellbinding sublimity and style; for a sage, in its sagacity; for a scholar, in its knowledge; for a sociologist, in its social system; for a legislator, in its legislation; for a politician, in its politics; for a ruler, in its rule of justice; and for the whole world, in such things which none of them can grasp like the information of the unseen, prophecies of future events, freedom from .discrepancy in its laws, knowledge and expression

The Qur'an claims to be a comprehensive miracle, covering all its aspects. It is a miracle for every individual man and jinn -an average person or a select one, learned or ignorant, man or woman, of a very high rank of excellence

or of a lower level -in short, anyone who has enough intelligence to understand the .Qur'anic speech

Man, by nature, comprehends a virtue and understands its various grades. Every person should look into an excellence which he or someone else has got; then he should compare that excellence or virtue with what the Qur'an contains of the same; and then he should decide - in all honestly and justice - whether it is in human power to bring a like of the Qur'an. Is it possible for a man to bring such divine knowledge, so ?well-reasoned, as the Qur'an has done

Is it within human power to build such character, based on foundation of reality, which may honestly be compared with the Qur'anic teaching in purity and excellence? Can human beings legislate perfect laws covering all human activities without blundering into discrepancies, with the spirit of monotheism and the word of piety permeating every order and its every implication, with purity and cleanliness feeding its root and ?shoots

Can such astonishing comprehensiveness and all-inclusiveness come from an untaught man? A man who was born and brought up among a people whose only share in human virtues was a life sustained with raids, plunders and wars; they buried their daughters alive, and killed their children for fear of poverty; they boasted of their fathers and married their mothers; debauchery was their pride; they condemned knowledge and showed off their ignorance; in spite of their haughtiness and chauvinism, they were preyed upon by every hunter

and were easy targets for anyone who wished to conquer them - one day they were under the Yemenite rule, the next day were ruled over by the Ethiopians; some day Byzantine emperors lorded over them, the other day it was Persia's turn to humiliate them. This is the picture, in miniature, of the Arabs before Islam. And in such .environment, the Qur'an was brought by the Prophet of Islam

Again, suppose a man brings a book, claiming that it is a guidance for the worlds. Will he dare to include in it the news and informations of the unseen - both past and future - not in one or two places but spread over a lot of topics - in stories, in prophecies, and about the events that are to happen in future? And what will be your judgment if not a ?single detail proves wrong

Once again, man is a part of this natural world; this world is constantly changing and developing from perfection to perfection. Is it possible for a man to talk about each - and every affair of human life; to give the world knowledge, laws, wisdom, admonition, parables, stories - concerning every matter, big or small - without ?committing any discrepancy, without showing any trace of gradual development

And especially so, if his talks are not delivered all at one time, are delivered piecemeal in a long period of twenty-three years? And even more so when some topics are repeated again and again, when there are shoots sprouting

from a previously planted root? Undoubtedly, it is not possible, because no man can .remain unchanged in his knowledge and outlook throughout his life

When a man ponders over these facts about the Qur'an -containing the above-mentioned distinctions besides many more - he can entertain no doubt whatsoever about its divine origin; he will feel sure that it is beyond human power, over and above .the natural and material causes

If someone is not in a position to understand this clear fact, he should follow the dictate of his nature - in other words, he should ask those who are knowledgeable .about this subject

Question: Why did not the Qur'an confine its challenge to the elite only? What is the use of including general public in this call? After all, a common man is easily-influenced by such claims and it takes him no time to accept pretensions of every .pretender

Don't you see that it was this group that surrendered to al-Bab, al-Baha', Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiyanī and al- Musaylamah, even though what those deceivers brought as their proof was more like a senseless jabber and raving delirium than a ?sensible talk

Reply: It was the only way to keep the miracle all-inclusive; the only possible method for discerning the perfection and excellence in a quality that has various ranks and grades. People have different grades of understanding; likewise, the virtues differ in .their perfection

Those who have high level of understanding and correct perception will easily .appreciate the high quality of an excellent work

Those who have a lower understanding should refer to the former for their .judgement. It is the dictate of nature and demand of human psyche

A miracle that can be universal and comprehensive, that can be addressed to every individual, in every place and at all times, that can be conveyed to all and can remain alive to the last day of the world, must necessarily be a set of divine knowledge and .spiritual realities

All other miracles were either material objects or a tangible event that were governed .by the laws of nature inasmuch as they were confined to a certain time and space

They were seen by only a limited number of people; even supposing, for the sake of argument, that it was observed by all people of that particular place, it could not be witnessed by people of other localities; and suppose that an impossible happened, that is, it was seen by the whole world, it could not continue eternally for the future .generations to observe

It was for this reason that Allah chose this academic and spiritual miracle, that is, the Qur'an, for the Prophet of Islam, so that it may continue its challenge to the whole mankind -in all places and in all generations. And thus the miracle continues in its .generality, defying every person, in every area and every era

First Specific Challenge: The Knowledge It Contains

Now we come to its specific challenges. It has offered particular challenge concerning :the knowledge it imparts arid cognition it contains. Allah says

and We have revealed . . .

;(the Book to you explaining clearly everything (۱۶:۸۹

.(nor anything green nor dry but (it is all) in a clear book (۶:۵۹ . . .

There are many other verses of the same theme. Look at the fundamental teachings given in the text of the Qur'an; then see its details for which it has referred the people :to the Prophet - as Allah says

and whatever the Apostle gives you, take it, and from whatever he forbids you, . . . ;(keep back . . . (۵۹:۷

that you may judge between people by means of that which Allah has taught you . . . .((۴:۱۰۵

Then you will know that Islam has put its attention to all big and small topics relevant to divine knowledge, moral virtues and religious laws - covering worship, mutual dealings, social regulations, penal code, and, in short, everything that affects life and .character

All this is based on the foundation of human nature and monotheism. Analyze the details and you will find monotheism as their basis; combine the basis with relevant .principles and you will get the details

Then it has declared that all this knowledge will remain valid to the end of the world; will continue to guide mankind and will always be relevant to human needs and :environment. Allah says

and most surely it is a Mighty Book: Falsehood shall not come to it from before it . . . .(nor from behind it; a revelation from the Wise, the Praised One (۴۱:۴۱-۴۲

Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We

.(will most surely be its guardian (۱۵:۹

In other words, it is a Book which is beyond the reach of the law of change and .development; it will never be disturbed by abrogation

A question may be asked here: The sociologists are of the opinion that the laws and regulations controlling the society must change according to the changes occurring in the structure of society. As the time passes and civilization marches ahead, it .becomes necessary to change the laws to cope with the changed situation

Then how can the sharī`ah of Islam continue without any change or abrogation all :these centuries? We shall explain this matter, God willing, under the verse

.(Mankind was but one people . . . (۲:۲۱۳

Here it is enough to point out that the Qur'an has built its laws on the foundation of monotheism and excellent ethics that spring from healthy human nature; it declares .that legislation must grow up from the seed of creation and existence

The scholars of sociology, on the other hand, have fixed their eyes on changes of society, totally ignoring the spiritual side of monotheism and morality. As a result, their word concentrates on material development of the society – and society is not a living .organism, it does not have a soul; and the word of Allah is the highest

Second Specific Challenge: The Recipient Of The Revelation

Another aspect of this challenge is the personality of the untaught Prophet who brought this Qur'an as a miracle in its words and in its meanings. He had not learnt from any teacher, was not

.trained by any instructor

:This challenge is contained in the following words of Allah

Say: "If Allah had desired (otherwise) I would not have recited it to you, nor would He have taught it to you; indeed I have lived a lifetime among you before it; do you not .(then understand?" (۱۰:۱۶

The Prophet lived among them as one of them. In all those years, he had not risen above them in scholarship, nor was he renowned for any knowledge. He did not deliver any lecture, nor did he compose a single line of poetry, up to his fortieth year - that is to say, for about two-thirds of his total life-span; he did not get any distinction .in literature or scholarship all these years

Then, all of a sudden, he brought what he said was the revelation from God, before which giants of literature felt like pigmies, and eloquent speakers became tongue-tied. He published that revelation to the furthest limits of the world, but no one dared .to bring its like in all these centuries

The outmost that his adversaries could say was that he must have learnt those stories from Christian monks during his trade-journeys to Syria. But he had gone to Syria only twice: First, in his early childhood, with his uncle, Abū Talib and then, at the age of twenty-five, with Maysarah, the slave of Khadījah. In both these journeys he was never alone day or night, and nobody ever reported any such meeting with any .supposed teacher

Even if we accept

for the sake of argument that such training session did take place, many questions will arise from it: Who taught him this divine knowledge of monotheism? Where did he get these wise rules and these realities? And lastly, who gave him this unsurpassed elocution which has kept the silver-tongued elocutionists dumbfounded all these ?years

Another suggestion was that he learned these sublime truths from a blacksmith, of :Roman origin, who made and sold swords. Allah replied to this allegation in this verse

And certainly We know that they say: "Only a mortal teaches him ". The tongue of him whom they are inclined to blame for it is barbarous, and this is clear Arabic language .((۱۶:۱۰۳

A third accusation was that he gained this knowledge from Salman, the Persian, who allegedly knew all about various religions and sects. But Salman met the Prophet in Medina and thereafter accepted Islam, while the major portion of the Qur'an was re-vealed at Mecca, and that part contained all the principles, knowledge and stories that were later repeated at Medina - we may say that Meccan revelation had more of these thing, than the verses revealed at Medina. The question is: What knowledge did .Salman add after his conversion to Islam? Nothing

Moreover, read the Old and the New Testaments, and compare the stories of the previous prophets and their people written in them with those revealed in the Qur'an. You will see that the latter's history and stories are different from the former's. The Bible attributes such

sins and evils to the prophets of Allah which one would be loth to ascribe to an .average man of good character

But the Qur'an absolves them from such blames. Then you will find in the Bible many topics that have no bearing on, and relevance to, the spiritual knowledge or moral excellence. The Qur'an never talks except about that which is truly beneficial to .people in their spiritual upliftment and character-building

Third Specific Challenge: Its Prophecies And Information Of Unseen

The Qur'an's third specific challenge is concerning its prophecies and the information :it gives of the unseen. Such verses may be divided in four categories

The information about previous prophets and their nations: Allah says about some .١ :of these stories

These are of the tidings of the unseen which We revealed to you; you did not know ;(them - (neither) you nor your people - before this... (١١:۴٩

:and He says after the story of Yūsuf

This is of the tidings of the unseen (which) We revealed to you, and you were not with ;(them when they resolved upon their affair, and they were devising plans (١٢ :١٠٢

:also, about the story of Maryam

This is of the tidings of the unseen which We reveal to you; and you were not with them when they cast their pens (to decide) which of them should have Maryam in his ;(charge, and you were not with them when they contended one with another (٣:۴۴

:and about `Isa

Such is 'Isa, son of Maryam; (this is) the saying of truth about which they dispute .((١٩:٣۴

There are many verses

.of the same import

:Prophecies of future events: For example: The Romans would avenge their defeat .۲

The Romans are vanquished, in a near land; and they, after being vanquished, shall ;(overcome within a few years (۳۰:۲-۴

:the Prophet would return to Mecca after his hijrah

Most surely He Who has made the Qur'an binding on you will bring you back to the ;(destination (۲۸ :۸۵

:the vision of the Prophet would certainly come true

Certainly Allah had shown to His Apostle the vision with truth: You shall most certainly enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allah pleases, in security, (some) having their heads ;(shaved and (others) having their haircut, you shall not fear (۴۸:۲۷

:the behaviour, in future, of a group of Muslims

Those who are left behind will say when you set forth for the gaining of acquisition: ;(Allow us (that) we may follow you. They desire to change the words of Allah (۴۸:۱۵

:nobody would be able to harm the Prophet

;(and Allah will protect you form the men (۵:۷۰ . . .

:the Qur'an will remain under the protection of Allah

.(Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its guardian (۱۵:۹

We may include in this category other numerous verses giving good tidings to the believers and threatening the disbelievers and pagans of Mecca of various .retributions

In this category come the prophecies of the signs and disturbances appearing soon :before the Day of Judgement. For example

And it is forbidden to a town which We destroyed that they shall not return, until when Gog and Magog

are let loose and they shall hasten forth from every elevated place. And the true promise shall draw nigh, then lo! the eyes of those who disbelieved shall be fixedly open: O woe to us! surely we were in heedlessness as to this; nay, we were unjust .(ones (۲۱:۹۵-۹۷

Allah has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will most certainly make them successors in the earth as He made successors those before .(them . . . (۲۴:۵۵

Say: `He has the power that He should send on you a chastisement from above you or from beneath your feet, or that He should throw you into confusion, (making you) .(of different parties; and make some of you taste the fighting of to others . .. . (۶:۶۵

The verses based on such scientific realities which were unknown, and even .۳ unthought of, when the Qur'an was revealed, and which have just now been :discovered after long researches

;(And We send the winds fertilizing (۱۵:۲۲

And the earth - We have spread it forth and put in it anchors (i.e. mountains) and ;(caused to grow in it of everything, weighed(۱۵:۱۹

Have We not made the earth a resting place, and the mountains as pegs (therein)? .((۷۸:۶ - ۷

The verses that allude to many great events and disorders that were to happen in .۴ the Islamic community, or the world in general, after the lifetime of the Prophet. For :example

O you who believe! whoever of you turns back from his religion, then

soon Allah will bring a people that He shall love them and they shall love Him, humbled before the believers, mighty against the unbelievers, they shall strive hard in Allah's way and shall not fear the censure of any censurer; this is Allah's grace, He gives it to whom He pleases (۵:۵۴);

And every nation had an apostle; so when their apostle came, the matter was decided between them with justice and they shall not be dealt with unjustly. And they say: "When will this threat come about, if you are truthful?" Say; "I do not control for myself any harm, or any benefit, except what Allah pleases; every nation has a term; when their term comes, they shall not then remain behind for an hour, nor can they go before (their time)". Say: "Tell me if His punishment overtakes you by night or by day! What then is there of it that the guilty would hasten on?" (۱۰:۴۷-۵۰) ;

Then set your face uprightly for the (right)religion in natural devotion (to the truth), the nature made by Allah in which He has made men; . . . and be not of the polytheists, of those who divided their religion and became sects; every sect rejoicing in what they had with them (۳۰:۳۰-۳۲).

There are many verses that come into this category, and we shall describe some of them when explaining the seventeenth chapter (The Night-journey). It should be noted here that this category is one of the specialties of this book of

.ours

Fourth Specific Challenge: No Discrepancies In The Qur'an

:It is one of the challenges of the Qur'an that there is no discrepancy in it. Allah says

Do they not then meditate on the Qur'an? And if it were from any other than Allah, .(they would have found in it many a discrepancy (۴:۸۲

This is a material world, governed by the law of change and development. Every item in this world changes day after day from weakness to strength, from deficiency to perfection -in its own self as well as in all its concomitants and attachments. Man is no .exception to this rule

He also undergoes constant change and development in his existence as well as in effects of his actions and reactions. And this law applies also to what he gets through his perception and intellect. Every man finds that his today is a bit more perfect than .his yesterday

Every passing hour makes him realize what mistakes he had committed in the past hour, what erroneous views he had held a few hours back. It is a fact that no sane .person can deny

In this background, look at the Qur'an. Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) brought this book piece by piece, one small chapter or a few verses at a time. It continued for twenty-three :years in different places, various conditions and divergent situations

In Mecca and Medina, by day and by night, during journeys and at home, in thick of battle and in time of peace, during hard up days and in easy times, when Muslims ,suffered defeat and when they were victorious

.in safety and in danger

It contained all types of subjects - it unveiled spiritual knowledge, taught excellent ethics and ordained laws for every conceivable aspect of life. In spite of all these factors, there is not a whiff of discrepancy in its matter or meaning - it is an oft-repeated book whose parts resemble one with the other.

There is not a least difference, contradiction or contrariety in the realities it has explained, in the principles it has laid down. One verse explains the rest, one sentence clarifies the others, as 'Alī (a.s.) said: "Its one part speaks with the other, and one portion testifies about the others."

No doubt, if such a book would have been from other than Allah, there would have been a lot of ups and downs in its style; the speech would have bounced between elegance and clumsiness; the themes would have ranged from correct to erroneous. In short, the book would have been uneven, unbalanced and full of discrepancies.

Question: This is a claim without any proof. Non-Muslim scholars have written many books showing that the Qur'an suffers from many discrepancies and mistakes - in construction of sentences (which fall short of the standard of eloquence) as well as in themes and meanings (which contain errors in its views and teachings).

The replies given by the Muslims are just piteous attempts to explain away those contradictions and shortcomings. Those are defects that a correct and good speech should not have had in the first place.

Reply: The so-called discrepancies

and defects have not been discovered by our adversaries; they have been mentioned (together with their replies) by Muslims in their books of exegesis and other subjects related to the Qur'an (not excepting this book of ours); the Muslim authors have used this method to show that what looks at the first glance an unusual style or expression .is in fact a gem of highest eloquence

The non-Muslim writers have just picked out those supposed defects and discrepancies and collected them in their books, ignoring the replies that showed the real beauty of those expressions. If eye of love is blind, the eye of enmity is not any .brighter

Question: Well, how can you explain away the difficulty that arises out of abrogation? :Many Qur'anic verses have been abrogated, as the Qur'an itself says

Whatever signs We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or ; (like it (۲:۱۰۶

And when We change (one)communication for (another) communication, and Allah .(knows best what He reveals . . . (۱۶:۱۰۱

Abrogation is at least a change of opinion, an inconsistency of thought, if not an .outright contradiction in speech

Reply: Abrogation is neither a contradiction in speech nor a change of opinion or thought. A rule is abrogated when the society, the environment, changes in such a way that the underlying wisdom of that rule remains no longer valid. The difference, if .any, is not in the opinion; it is rather in the subject matter

A clear evidence of it may be seen in

the abrogated verses themselves – they invariably always contained some phrases or clauses to show that the given order was a temporary one, that it would soon be :abrogated. For example

And as for those who are guilty of lewdness from among your women, call to witness against them four(witnesses) from among you; then if they bear witness confine them to the houses until death takes them away or Allah makes some way for .(them(۴:۱۵

:Note the last sentence and the hint it gives. Another example

Many of the people of the Book wish that they could turn you back into unbelievers after your faith . . . But pardon and forgive (them) until Allah should bring about His .(command (۲:۱۰۹

.Here too the concluding phrase shows that the rule ordained was not forever

Fifth Specific Challenge: Its Eloquence

point

The Qur'an has also challenged its adversaries to bring its like in its eloquence. Allah :says

Or, do they say: "He has forged it?" Say: "Then bring ten chapters like it forged and call upon whom you can besides Allah, if you are truthful." But if they do not answer you, then know that it is revealed by Allah's knowledge and that there is no god but He; will (you then submit? (۱۱:۱۳-۱۴

:These verses were revealed at Mecca. Again Allah says

Or, do they say: "He has forged it?" Say: "Then bring a chapter like this and call whom you can besides Allah, if you are truthful." Nay, they have rejected that of which they have no comprehensive knowledge, and its final interpretation

.(has not yet come to them (١٠:٣٨-٣٩

These are Meccan verses too. All these verses challenge the doubters and disbelievers to bring the like of ten or even one chapter of the Qur'an in its style and eloquence, as eloquence was the most accomplished art of the Arabs of those days. Undoubtedly, they had reached the highest peak of eloquence. No preceding, contemporary or following nation ever reached even near them in their mastery of .literature

Their expression was elegant, their style enchanting; their words perfectly fitted their themes and meanings; their talks were always in harmony with the occasions; their words were plain and their sentences beautiful; and their speech had an easy flow and inimitable grace. It was a way of which they were the pioneers and the only .walkers

The Qur'an challenged such a nation in every possible way, so as to excite their rage, rouse their fury and fire them with determination to meet the challenge. It should not be forgotten that they were extremely proud of their art of eloquence and never acknowledged the least elocutionary skill to anyone else. In spite of that arrogance of .theirs, the Prophet dared them to bring just one chapter like the Qur'an

It is a challenge that even now is ringing in the ears of disbelievers, defying them to forge, if they can, just one chapter like it. But the Arabs' only answer was to avoid it; the more forcefully they were challenged, the more evident their helplessness was. Ultimately, they used

.to hide themselves to avoid hearing its sound

:Allah says

Now surely they fold up their breasts that they may conceal from Him; now surely, when they put their garments as a covering, He knows what they conceal and what .(they make known (۱۱:۵

Even after fourteen centuries, no one has been able to bring its like. Those who tried it put themselves to shame and made themselves targets of ridicule. History has preserved some samples of those pathetic attempts. Musaylamah (who posed as a :(prophet) wrote these words in reply to the Qur'an ch. ۱۰۵ (The Elephant

The elephant, what is the elephant! And what will make you understand what the“ ”.elephant is? It has an unwholesome tail, and a long trunk

In another “verse”, which he recited before al-Sajah (who also claimed to be a prophetess), he said: ”. . . then we penetrate it into you women a hard penetration, ”. . .and take it out from you forcefully

Look at this rigmarole and decide its worth. A Christian in latter days wrote this :“chapter” in reply to the Chapter of The Opening

All praise is due to the Beneficent, the Lord of the beings, the King, the Subduer. For“ ”.Thee is the worship, and from Thee is the help. Guide us to the path of faith

.All attempts to meet this challenge suffered the same fate

Two Questions

First: It is unreasonable to say that a speech can reach a level where it would become a miracle, a super-natural work. Language has been made by

human ingenuity. How can a product of nature be above the reach of nature? A maker .is more powerful than the thing he makes; a cause always encompasses its effect

It is the man who invented the words to meet his social needs, to convey to others' minds what one thinks or feels. The relationship of a word with its meaning is created by man. It is a subjective quality given to the word by man. This quality cannot reach beyond the ability of the maker himself. In other words, it is impossible for a speech to .rise above the human ability

Second: Let us accept for the time being that a particular composition of a speech may reach super-natural level, may become a miracle. Every intended theme may be clothed in various sentences, each differing from the others in grades of perfection; and out of those numerous sentences one would reach a standard which would be .beyond human ability and power - and that composition would be a miracle

It means that for every intended meaning there would be one miraculous sentence; and other structures would be below that standard. But we see that the Qur'an, more often than not, repeats many themes - and especially the stories - using different compositions and dissimilar styles. Whichever sentence-structure and style is .accepted as a miracle, the other ones would fall short of that standard

Reply: Before replying to these objections one matter should be clarified here. It were such questions which led some Muslim

to turn away). They believed like = الصَّرف) scholars to believe in the theory of as-sarf other Muslims that it was impossible for men to bring a like of the whole Qur'an; or its .ten chapters, or even one chapter

But, according to them, this inability of men was not based on the fact that the Qur'anic speech in itself was beyond the human power. The real reason was that Allah, by His predominant will and decree, has turned away and dissuaded would-be adversaries from bringing its like. Allah has done so to preserve and protect the .sanctity of the prophethood

This theory was totally wrong. This explanation is not in conformity with the clear :import of the challenging verses. Allah says for example

Or, do they say: "He has forged it?" Say: "Then bring ten chapters like it forged and call upon whom you can besides Allah, if you are truthful. "But if they do not answer you, then know that it is revealed by Allah's knowledge and that there is no god but He; will .(you then submit? (۱۱:۱۳-۱۴

Ponder on the sentences, "then know that it is revealed by Allah's knowledge". The challenge was meant to prove that the Qur'an was a revelation; that it was not a speech forged by the Apostle; and that it was revealed by Allah's knowledge and not :by the Satans. The same theme is found in the following verses

Or, do they say: "He has forged it." Nay! they do not believe. Then let them bring

.(a talk like it if they are truthful. (۵۲:۳۳-۳۴

And the Satans have not come down with it; and it behooves them not, and they have not the power to do (it). Most surely they are far removed from the hearing (ofit) .((۲۶:۲۱۰-۲۱۲

On the other hand, this theory of "turning away" implies that the reality of the Qur'an's miracle was not in its being a revelation from Allah; the miracle was that Allah pre… :vented the people from bringing a like of it. Again look at the verse

Or, do they say: "He has forged it?" Say: "Then bring a chapter like this and call whom you can besides Allah, if you are truthful." Nay, they have rejected that of which they have no comprehensive knowledge, and its final interpretation has not yet come to .(them . . . (۱۰:۳۸-۳۹

This verse clearly says that what made them helpless before the Qur'an, what made it impossible for them to bring a like of even one of its chapters, was the fact that it has a final interpretation whose knowledge is reserved for Allah - a knowledge which they .lacked. It is this inherent quality of the Qur'an which vanquished the adversaries

It was not that they had ability to bring its like but Allah prevented them from doing so. :Then, there is the verse

Do they not then meditate on the Qur'an? And if it were from any other than Allah, .(they would have found in it many a discrepancy (۴:۸۲

It shows that the miracle is

in the inherent quality of the Qur'an that it was free from discrepancy in its words and meanings - because it is a quality which is not within the power of any creature - not that there was some discrepancy in this Book, but Allah prevented people from finding .it out

All these Qur'anic declarations prove that the theory of as-sarf has no leg to stand, .and one should not take it seriously

Now we come to the objections mentioned earlier. It is a fallacious argument that as the language is a product of human ingenuity, it can never reach a level which would be beyond the grasp or ability of human beings; language, being a product, cannot be more powerful than its producer. The fallacy lies in the fact that what has been .invented by man is simple words for particular meanings

But this congruity of the words with their meanings does not teach the man how to arrange those words, how to plan, draft and deliver a talk in the best possible way - in a way that the talk reflects the beauty of the meaning as it is in the mind, and the meaning in its turn becomes a mirror of the reality, remains in complete agreement .with the fact

It requires dexterity in the art of eloquence, adroitness in elocution; also it depends on sharp intelligence and comprehensive knowledge so that the speaker may be fully cognizant of all aspects of the subject matter. It is this skill and knowledge

that differs from man to man, and creates difference between talk and talk in their .respective perfection and beauty

So, there are three aspects of a human talk; Knowledge of language - a man may be having the most comprehensive knowledge of the words of a language, without being able to speak it; elocutionary skill - a man may be the most accomplished orator, without being cognizant of material and spiritual realities; Knowledge of realities - a man may be the most learned scientist or theologian without having the ability to .express his views and meanings intelligibly

These three factors may be found separately (as mentioned above) and may also combine together in some people. And on them depend the beauty and the eloquence .of a speech

The first factor - single words for their meanings - has been invented by social instinct of man. But the remaining two depend on intellectual refinement and delicate .discernment

Human perception, intelligence and discernment is limited and restricted. We cannot comprehend all the details of an event, all concomitants of a fact. As a result, we cannot be sure of being right at any time. Furthermore, we are gradually moving from deficiency to perfection, and so is our perception and discernment. Look at any spellbinding orator or enchanting poet; compare his earlier work with his latest and .you will see the difference

In this background, let us look at human speech - any human speech. First, we cannot be sure that it is free from errors of fact

and judgment, because, as mentioned above, no speaker can have comprehensive .knowledge of all the details and concomitants of an event

Second, it will not be on the same level with speaker's former or later speech. Not only that: Even in the same speech the beginning will surely be on a level different from that of the end, although we, probably, will not be able to discern it because of the .minuteness of difference

Now, when we find a decisive speech, based on comprehensive knowledge, and free from all types of discrepancy, we will have to admit that it is not the work of a mortal :man. This reality has been described in the following verses

Do they not then meditate on the Qur'an? And if it were from any other than Allah, ;(they would have found in it many a discrepancy (۴:۸۲

I swear) by the heaven endued with rotation, and by the earth splitting (with plants) .(etc.), most surely it is a decisive word, and it is not a jest (۸۶:۱۱-۱۴

Note the adjectives used for the heaven and the earth - they point to the constant changes occurring therein, because the oath is about a Book which is free from change and difference, inasmuch as it is based on an unchangeable and lasting reality, that is, its "interpretation". (It is a Qur'anic terminology that will be explained in (.Ch. ۳

:Also, Allah says

; (Nay! it is a glorious Qur'an, in a guarded tablet (۸۵: ۲۱-۲۲

I swear) by the Book that makes manifest (the)

truth); surely We have made it an Arabic Qur'an so that you may understand. And ;(surely it is in the original of the Book with Us, truly elevated, full of wisdom (۴۳:۲ -۴

But nay! (I swear) by the falling of stars; and most certainly it is a great oath if you only knew; most surely it is an honoured Qur'an, in a book that is hidden; none do .(touch it save the purified ones. A revelation by the Lord of the worlds (۵۶:۷۵ -۸۰

These and other similar verses show that the Qur'an is based on established realities that do not change, that are never altered. And, therefore, the Qur'an itself is safe .from change, alteration and discrepancy

To come back to the main objection: Accepted that language has been made by men. But it does not mean that there cannot be found a piece of literature that is beyond the reach of the very men who made the language. Otherwise, we would have to say that a sword-maker must be the bravest of all the swordsmen, the inventor of chess !or lute must be the most accomplished chess-master or lutenist

The perfect eloquence demands that, first, the word should be in complete harmony with the intended meaning, and, second, the conveyed meaning must be in ?accordance with the established fact. How the words fit the meanings

The structural sequence of the words and their parts should perfectly agree with the natural order of the intended meaning and its parts - bringing the man-made

language and sentences in total agreement with the nature. (See for details Dala'ilu 'l-ijaz of ash-Shaykh `Abdu 'l-Qahir al-Jurjanī.)

As for the meaning, it must be correct and true, based on a real fact existing outside our imagination - and that fact should be of permanent value, unchangeable and un... alterable. The first quality (the agreement of the word with meaning) depends on this basic quality of the meaning.

A very eloquent sweet-sounding jocular speech cannot stand before a serious talk; nor can an eloquent, serious speech - if it is based on wrong premises - be equal to a talk that reflects true facts and comprehensive wisdom.

A speech attains the highest standard of eloquence when its words are sweet, its style free-flowing, its meaning fitting the occasion and its conveyed proposition based on true facts.

Such a talk, based as it is on reality, can never differ with other realities; can never disagree with other truths. Truth and reality is a non-divisible entity. Truth cannot refute another truth; reality cannot oppose another reality.

Lie, on the other hand, may be in opposition to another lie as it surely is against the truth. Ponder on the verse:

. . . and what is there after the truth but error (۱۰:۳۲).

Note that truth is singular; there is no division in it. Again Allah says:

. . . and follow not (other) ways, for they will scatter you away from His ways . . . (۶:۱۵۳).

Lie has many ways, it is not only disunited but also disuniting.

Obviously, there can

be no difference whatsoever between one truth and the other; instead, there shall be total union and unison between them – one truth will lead to the other, one reality will guide to the other; thus, one part of the Qur'an confirms the others, one sentence .testifies for the others

It is a wonderful quality of the Qur'an. Take any verse; it is clear in its meaning; add to it another relevant verse equally clear; and you will find them together pointing to a new reality that was not shown by either verse separately: then put them side by side .with a third relevant verse, and you will gain fresh insight into new sublime realities

It is a unique quality of the Qur'an, and you will see many examples of this special characteristic in this book. Unfortunately the exegetes had so far neglected this method. Had they followed this way since the early days, they would have discovered .by now so much of its hidden treasures

This lengthy discourse was necessary to show that the two objections laid down against the Qur'anic miracle of eloquence were baseless. Miraculous eloquence is not based on words alone. Therefore, it is out of place to say that as it is man who had ?made the language, how can any speech be above the reach of the man himself

Also, there is no room for the question that as only one out of many possible compositions can be the highest, how is it possible to express one idea

?in different ways, and then to claim that all were of miraculous standard

Our foregoing explanation has made it clear that the miracle of eloquence depends on meaning - on its agreement with sublime unchangeable reality and on its conformity .with the words

The Reality Of Miracle According To The Qur’an

point

The Qur'an repeatedly asserts the occurrence of miracle - an unusual preternatural phenomenon, which shows the authority of metaphysical forces over the physical and .material world. Miracle is not something against self-evident rational truth

Some people have tried to explain away the verses that describe various miracles; their aim was to make the Qur'an fit the principles of modern physical sciences. But such attempts are unacceptable, as they are a forced burden on the language and the .Qur'an

We are going to explain, under various headings, what the Qur'an teaches us about .the meaning and reality of miracle

The Qur'an Confirms the General Rule of the Cause-and-Effect .١

The Qur'an says that in this natural world everything, every effect, has a cause; that there is a system of cause-and-effect permeating through this world. It is a self-evident reality; and on this truth depend the scientific and academic researches and discussions. Man by nature believes that there must be a cause for every natural .phenomenon

Likewise, academic researches try to find out relevant causes for all such happenings. What is a cause? It is such a thing, or a combination of things, that whenever it occurs, .another thing - its effect - unfailingly comes into being

We try to find out by experiments the causes of various things. For example,

experience has taught us that

if there is any burn, it must have been caused by fire, movement, friction or some such cause. A cause must be unfailable, comprehensive and universal. In other words, .whenever and wherever the cause is found, its effect must be found

This matter is clearly confirmed by the Qur'an. It takes this principle for granted when it talks about life, death, sustenance and other heavenly or earthly phenomena - .although it ultimately ascribes all the effects, and their causes too, to Allah

The Qur'an, therefore, confirms the general system of the cause-and-effect; whenever a cause is found (with all its necessary conditions) its effect must come into being, and whenever we see an effect, it surely and unfailingly proves the existence .of its cause

(The Qur'an Affirms Miracle (Super-Natural Events .۲

The Qur'an, nevertheless, narrates many an event that goes against the normal, natural system of the cause-and-effect. It ascribes many super-natural miracles to various prophets, like Nūh, Hūd, Salih, Ibrahīm, Lūt, Dawūd, Sulayman, Mūsa, `Isa .(!and Muhammad (peace of Allah be on them all

It should not be forgotten here that those events, although abnormal and uncus- tomary, were not inherently impossible; they were not like an assertion that `A positive proposition and its opposite are affirmed together and are negated together'; or like a statement that `A thing can be separated from its own self'; or that `One is .'not a half of two

We instinctively know that such propositions are impossible, they cannot be. But the miracles shown by the prophets were not of this category; otherwise, the minds of

untold billions of religionists, since the dawn of humanity, would not have accepted them and believed in them. No man accepts an inherently impossible statement, nor .does any sane person ascribe such a thing to another

Moreover, the effects that are called miracle, are not unknown to the nature. The natural world is continuously engaged in bestowing on the matter one form after the other, turning one event into another, giving life to the dead, and death to the living, .transforming the misfortune into fortune and the comfort into discomfort

All this is happening daily in the world of nature; the only difference between a natural event and a miraculous one is in the speed and steps required to reach the goal. A natural cause brings about its effect, in special conditions, at a particular time and .space, step by step in a long series of changes

The matter present in a walking-stick may one day appear in a running serpent; a disintegrating skeleton may one day become a living man - but in its natural course it will take a very long time, under certain conditions of time and space, with numerous consecutive causes which would constantly change that particular matter from one form to the other, taking it from one step to the next and then to the third and so on, .until it appears in the required shape and form

In normal way, it cannot happen without its proper causes, without its necessary conditions; nor can it be brought into being

by will-power of a human being. But when it comes to a miracle, it happens just by the .will of the prophet, without any material cause and without any lapse of time

Of course, it is very difficult for a simple mind - as it is for a scientific brain - to understand such super-natural events; man is, after all, accustomed to the natural-causality. On the other hand, no scientist can outright reject occurrence of super-.natural phenomena even in this atomic age

Every day someone or the other demonstrates his skill bringing some super-natural events about; people see it, radios and televisions broadcast it, newspapers and magazines publish it; and nobody says that it could not have happened as it was .against the laws of nature

Such phenomena have led many modern scholars to the theory that man, like everything else, is surrounded by unknown magnetic or electric currents; man may, through rigorous training, get control over the surrounding currents, and use them to affect other material things in abnormal and unusual ways, bringing those astonishing .feats about

If this theory is proved correct and all-inclusive, it will supersede all present theories that explain various happenings and effects in terms of motion and power; it will replace all previous causes with one all-pervasive natural cause: the magnetic .currents

This is their theory. They are right in their belief that every natural phenomenon must .have a natural cause if the causal relationship between them is intact

The Qur'an has not identified by name any all-pervasive natural cause

that would explain all natural and super-natural events, as it is not within the main purposes of this divine book. But it affirms that every natural phenomenon has a .natural cause - by permission of Allah

In other words, every phenomenon is totally dependent on Allah, Who has appointed for it a certain procedure, a natural cause through which it gets its existence -the :existence that is given by Allah. Allah says

and whoever fears Allah He will make for him an outlet, and give him sustenance from whence he thinks not; and whoever trusts in Allah, He is sufficient for him; surely Allah . (attains His purpose; Allah indeed has made a measure for everything (۶۵:۲-۳

Its first sentence unreservedly declares that whoever fears Allah and has trust in Him, Allah is sufficient for him, and He will surely manage his affairs and make him succeed, even if in the normal way it may seem impossible, even if the material :causes go against him. It is supported by the following verses

And when My servants ask you concerning Me, then verily I am very near; I answer ; (the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me (۲:۱۸۶

;(Call upon Me, I will answer you(۴۰:۶۰

.(Is not Allah sufficient for His servant? (۳۹:۳۶

The next sentence, "surely Allah attains His purpose", explains the reason of the first :declaration. The same theme is found in the verse

.(and Allah is predominant over His affair, but most people do not know (۱۲:۲۱ . . .

This sentence too is

all-inclusive and without any condition. Allah has His own way to let a thing happen, if .He so wills - even if the normal ways are closed, even if usual paths to it are cut off

This may possibly happen in two ways: First, Allah may bring that thing into being simply by His will, without resorting to any material or natural cause. Second, there may be an alternative natural cause, unknown to us, which Allah may have appointed for that phenomenon; it may be hidden from our eyes but the Maker and Creator, .Who has prescribed it, knows it and uses it to attain His purpose

This second possibility seems more appropriate in view of the last sentence, "Allah indeed has made a measure for everything." This sentence shows that every effect, whether it is in accordance with the normal causality or not, has a measure appointed by Allah, is related to other beings, has a connection with other things; Allah may bring that effect into existence through any other related thing, even if the normal cause is .absent

What should not be forgotten is the basic fact that it is Allah Who has bestowed .causality on a cause; this relation of cause and effect is not independent of Allah

Allah has created causal relation between various things. He can attain His purpose through any way He wishes. No doubt, there is the system of cause-and-effect in the world; but this chain is in the hands of Allah, He may use it in

.any way He wills

There is a real causal relation between a thing and the things that have preceded it; but that reality is not as we know it – that is why no academic or scientific theory is capable of explaining all phenomena of the world; it is really as Allah knows, makes .and manages it

:"This basic principle has been referred to in the verses of "decree" or "measure

And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it, and We do not send it down .(but in a known measure (۱۵:۲۱

;(Surely We have created every thing according to a measure (۵۴:۴۹

.(and Who created every thing, then ordain for it a measure (۲۵:۲ . . .

Who created then made complete, and Who made (things) according to a measure . (then guided (them to their goal) (۸۷:۲ – ۳

:Look also at the following verses

No misfortune befalls on the earth nor in your own souls, but it is in a book before We .(bring it into existence (۵۷:۲۲

No affliction comes about but by Allah's permission; and whoever believes in Allah, He .(guides aright his heart; and Allah is Cognizant of all things (۶۴:۱۱

These verses (and especially the first) show that the things take their particular identity in accordance with a measure appointed for it by Allah; that measure gives it its individuality and defines it; and that measure and definition precedes the thing and then accompanies it. A thing can be properly delineated only if it is seen in

.its perspective, clearly defining its relation to all other things

The other related things serve as a mould that gives this item its peculiar shape and particular form. Every material effect is connected with all things which precede or accompany it. All such things together serve as the cause of this effect; and this one in its turn becomes a part of the cause of other effects that come later.

:Also, it may be proved from the following two verses

; (That is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of every thing. . . (۴۰:۶۲

there is no living creature but He holds it by its forelock; surely my Lord is on the . . . .(straight path(۱۱:۵۶

Add to them the fact that the Qur'an confirms the general system of causality -and you will find the complete picture displayed before your eyes.

۱. The first verse says that every thing is created by Allah, and the second one states that creation is on a single pattern; there is no deviation in it as that would cause chaos and disturbance.

۲. The Qur'an confirms the general system of causality for all material things.

۳. It follows that every material thing and effect is invariably always created by a cause - a cause that precedes it and brings it into being. It makes no difference whether it is a normal and usual cause, or a supernatural one. There must always be a cause.

۴. Many usual causes which sometimes fail to bring about the expected effects are not the real causes.

The real causes are those which never fail to create the expected effects. An example may be given of various diseases and their causes; influenza was previously thought to be caused by cold; but cold did not always create it, now it has been discovered .that it is caused by a virus. The same is true about many supernatural feats

Whatever is Caused by Natural Causes is Really Caused by Allah .۳

The Qur'an, while affirming the causal relation between a cause and its effect, ascribes every effect to Allah. The inference is that these normal and usual causes are not independent in creating their effects; the real cause, in the true sense of this .word, is only Allah

:Allah says

- ;(surely His is the creation and the command (۷:۵۴
- ;(Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allah's (۲:۲۸۴
- ;(His is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth (۵۷:۵
- .(Say: "All is from Allah" (۴:۷۸

There are numerous such verses showing that everything belongs exclusively to Allah; He may deal with it in any way He likes; no one else can handle it at all except by permission of Allah; He allows whomsoever He wishes to manage, influence and effect it to a certain extent. But this divine permission, establishing the relation of causality, does not make that cause independent of Allah; it is just a permission given .by the real owner to use his property

The man having this permission cannot transgress the limits imposed by the owner. :Allah says

- Say: "O Allah, Master of kingdom! Thou givest the

kingdom to whomsoever thou pleasest and takest away the kingdom from ;(whomsoever Thou pleasest (٣:٢۶

- ; (Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it (to its goal) (٢:۵٠

- whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; who is he that can . . . ;(intercede with Him but by His permission? (٢:٢۵۵

- and He is firmly established on Arsh, regulating the affair; there is no intercessor . . . .(except after His permission (١٠:٣

The causes do have the causality because Allah has given it to them. They have got it, but are not independent of Allah. It is this factor that has been described in above verses as "intercession" and "permission". Permission means that there was an impediment which, but for this permission would have hindered the now-authorized .agent from interfering in this affair

In short, every cause has been given the power to create the relevant effect; but the .real authority is yet in the hands of Allah

The Souls of the Prophets do have Influence Over the Super-Natural Events .۴

:Allah says

and it was not meet for an apostle that he should bring a sign except with Allah's . . . permission; but when the command of Allah came, judgement was given with truth, .(and those who treated (it) as a lie were lost (۴٠:٧٨

The verse shows that it was the apostle who brought the sign - by permission of Allah. The souls of the prophets were given a special power to cause the miracle; and that ,causal power, like all other causes

.created its effect with permission of Allah

:Again Allah says

And they followed what the Satans chant (of sorcery) against the kingdom of Sulayman; and not that Sulayman disbelieved, but (it was) the Satans that disbelieved, they taught men sorcery and what was sent down to the two angels at Babylon, Harut and Marut: Yet these two taught no one until they had said, "Surely we are only a trial, therefore do not be a disbeliever". Even then men learned from these two that by which they might cause a separation between a man and his wife; and .(they cannot hurt with it anyone except with Allah's permission (۲:۱۰۲

This verse proves two things: magic has some reality; and it, not unlike miracle, is .caused by a psychical factor of the magician, by permission of Allah

Take a miracle, a magic, a mysterious wonder of a saint, or a spell-bringing skill acquired through rigorous practice - all these extra-ordinary or super-natural deeds emanate from their agents' psychical factors - or will-power - as the above-.mentioned verses have shown

But Allah has made it clear that the psychical cause found in His apostles, prophets and believers is predominant, has the mastery, over all other causes, in all imaginable :conditions; it can never be overpowered. Allah says

And certainly Our word has already gone forth in respect of Our servants, the apostles: Most surely they shall be the assisted ones, and most surely Our host alone .(shall be the victorious ones (۳۷:۱۷۱-۱۷۳

Allah has written down: I will most

.(certainly prevail, I and My apostle . . . (۵۸:۲۱

Most surely We help Our apostles and those who believe, in this world's life and on the .(day when the witnesses shall stand (۴۰:۵۱

As you see, these verses do not put any condition or restriction on the promised victory; the apostles and the believers shall be victorious over their adversaries in all .conditions and situations

It may be inferred from it that this divine source is something metaphysical, preternatural. Material things are, in their nature, measured and limited; they get the worst of it if they are faced by another thing which is superior in power. But this preternatural spiritual source, which is assisted by the will of Allah, is never defeated by any factor; whenever it is faced by any material adversary, it is given by Allah a far .more superior power to achieve victory with flying colours

Whatever is Caused by Psychical Power Depends on a Command from Allah .۵

Read again the last sentence of the verse ۴۰:۷۸, mentioned at the beginning of the :preceding chapter

but when the command of Allah came, judgement was given with truth, and those" ."who treated (it) as a lie were lost

You will see that the supernatural event caused by the psychical power of the agent depends on a command from Allah – in addition to His permission. That command may coincide with the said permission, or may be one with it. The command of Allah is His :creation, described by the word 'Be' in the verse

His command, when He intends anything, is only that He

.(says to it, “Be”, and it is (۳۶:۸۲

:Also Allah says

Surely this is a reminder, so whoever wishes takes to his Lord a way. And you do not .(wish except that Allah wishes; surely Alldh is Knowing, Wise (۷۶:۲۹-۳۰

It is naught but a reminder for the worlds, for him among you who wishes to go straight. And you do not wish except that Alldh wishes, the Lord of the worlds (۸۱:۲۷-.(۲۹

These verses show that the affairs which are within the sphere of the man's will, and under his control and authority, are still dependent on the divine will for their existence. What these verses say is this: The intentional actions of a man are done by .his will; but that will itself depends on the will of Allah

The verses do not say that whatever is wished by man is wished by Allah. Had it been the case, no human wish would have remained unfulfilled - because it would have ;become the will of Allah! Also, many verses refute this idea

And if We had wished We would certainly have given to every soul its guidance . . . .((۳۲:۱۳

And if your Lord had wished surely all those who are in the earth would have believed .((۱۰:۹۹

Our will depends on the divine will; our action depends on our will, and also they depend - indirectly, through our will -on the will of Allah. And both our will and action .”depend on the command of Allah - on His word, “Be

Things, affairs and events

may be either natural or supernatural; and the super-natural may be either on the side of good, like miracle, or on that of evil, like magic and sooth saying. But all of them come into being through natural causes, and at the same time they depend on the will of Allah. In other words, they cannot come into being unless the natural cause .coincides, or becomes one, with the permission and command of Allah

All things are equal in this respect; but when a prophet brings about a miracle, or a good servant of Allah prays to Him for a thing, an additional factor, that is, the decisive command of Allah, is added thereto; and the desired effect or event unfailingly comes :into being. Allah says

; (Allah has written down: I will most certainly prevail, I and My apostles (۵۸:۲۱

.(I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me. . . (۲:۱۸۶

.See also other such verses quoted in the preceding chapter

The Qur'an Attributes the Miracle to an Invincible Cause .۶

The preceding chapters have made it clear that miracle, like other natural and super-natural things, needs a natural cause; and that all causes depend on some metaphysical causes. All these events and effects may, thus, be divided into four :categories

First: The normal events: They come into being by normal apparent causes which are accompanied by real causes - in most cases those real causes are material ones; arid .those causes depend on the divine will and. command

Second: The extra-ordinary events of evil nature, like sorcery and sooth saying: They

are caused by natural but unusual and abnormal causes, which are accompanied by the real causes; and those causes depend on the divine permission and will.

Third: The extra-ordinary events of good nature, like a prayer answered by Allah: They are caused by the natural and real cause, with permission and will of Allah - but such events do not contain any element of challenge, that is, they do not purport to prove the truth of any call or claim.

Fourth: The miracles: The extra-ordinary, super-natural events of good character, which are brought about as a challenge, to prove the truth of the call or claim. They too are caused by the natural and real causes with permission and will of Allah.

The third and fourth categories have an extra quality in them: Their cause is fortified by an invincible factor; it can never be overpowered, as it is always accompanied by the decisive command of Allah.

Question: It is strange to say that miracle is caused by a natural cause. Suppose, we discover the real natural cause of a miracle; will it not then be possible for us to create that miracle? If yes, then miraculousness would be a relative matter; any action would be a miracle in the eyes of those who are unaware of its cause, but quite an ordinary thing for those who know.

In the same way, an event that was believed to be a miracle in dark ages would not be so impressive in this age of science and

knowledge. If scientific research found out the real natural causes of the miracles, there would be no miracle at all – and no miracle could be used to prove the truth of .the prophet's claim

What all this leads to is this: A miracle is not a proof except against him who is ignorant of its natural cause; therefore, it cannot be put as an evidence of the truth of the .prophet's claim

Reply: Miraculousness of a miracle does not depend on unknowability of its cause; nor is it a miracle because it emanates from an extraordinary or mysterious cause. It is a miracle because it is brought about by such an extraordinary cause which is invincible, .which cannot be overcome, cannot be defeated

Let us look at the case of a seriously sick person, who, all of a sudden, is cured by the prayers of a believer. It is called a miraculous event, because it emanates from an invincible cause. We know that patient could be cured by medical treatment, and it would have been a normal process; but this cause, that is, the medical treatment, could be foiled by other more powerful factors; and that is why it is not called a .miracle

The Qur'an Counts Miracle as a Proof of the Truth of the Claim of Prophethood .۷

Question: What is the connection between miracle and veracity of the claim of prophethood? Reason fails to see any binding relation between the two. But the Qur'an time and again asserts this concomitancy, as may be seen in the stories of various prophets, for example, Hūd, Salih, Mūsa, `Isa

.(!and Muhammad (peace of Allah be on all of them

The Qur'an narrates that no sooner did they announce their claim than they were asked by their people to bring some miracle to prove the truth of their claim; and they responded to it by showing the miracle.

Not only that. Some of them were given their miracle even before their nations had asked them for it. Allah told Mūsa (a.s.) at the start of his mission:

.(Go you and your brother with My signs and be not remiss in remembering Me (۲۰:۴۲

:(.And He says about `Isa (a.s

And (will make him) an apostle to the children of Israel: "That I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I create for you out of dust like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird with Allah's permission and I heal the blind and the leper, and bring the dead to life with Allah's permission and I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your house; most surely there is a sign in this for you, if you are believers" (۳:۴۹).

The same is the position of the Qur'an which was given to the Prophet right at the start of his mission. The reason does not see any connection whatsoever between the truth of the message of an apostle or a prophet on one hand and his ability to show a super-natural sign on the other.

Moreover, the beauty of the principles expounded

by the apostles and the prophets, strengthened as it is by irrefutable proofs, dispenses with the need of any miracle - for an intelligent and knowledgeable person. That is why it is said that miracles are needed for convincing the simple-minded people, because they cannot understand a learned discourse; but knowledgeable .persons do not need them

Reply: The prophets had not brought the miracles to prove any principle of religion, like belief in Oneness of God and the Day of Resurrection etc. - the truth of which could be realized by intellect and reason. They always proved such things with .reasoning and logical arguments

:For example, Allah says regarding the existence of the Creator

Their apostles said: "Is there doubt about Allah, the Master of the heavens and the ;(earth?" (۱۴:۱۰

:and He says about resurrection

And We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them in vain; that is the opinion of those who disbelieve; then woe to those who disbelieve on account of the fire. Shall We treat those who believe an and do good like the mischief-makers in the earth? Or shall We make those who guard (against evil) like the wicked? .((۳۸:۲۷-۲۸

Why were, then, the apostles asked to show miracle, and why did they bring it about? It was to prove that they were in fact sent by Allah; it was meant to authenticate their .claim

The prophets claimed that they were sent by Allah, that He had revealed His message to them - either directly or

through an angel. It was an assertion of a super-natural event; a claim of a reality beyond the physical senses and mental cognization of their people; a fact above the .level of man's perception

If that claim was right, it would be a special metaphysical disposition reserved for the prophets only. The difficulty was that the prophets were like any other human being in their humanity and in its characteristics. How could they be favoured for this especial ?relationship with the world beyond nature

:The disbelievers, therefore, resorted to two methods to disprove the prophets' claim

:First Method: They tried to refute it through such “arguments” as the following

a) They said: “You are nothing but human being like us; you wish to turn us away from .(what our fathers used to worship” (۱۴:۱۰

The apostles were like all other men; and other men do not receive such divine revelation as was claimed by the apostles. If they could be given revelation from God, ?why could not others get it as well? Were not all of them alike in their humanity

:The apostles replied to it in these words

Their apostles said to them: “We are nothing but human beings like yourselves, but . (Allah bestows (His) favours on whom He pleases of His servants. . . “ (۱۴:۱۱

They accepted that they were like all men in their humanity, but showed that apostleship was a very especial favour of Allah, and He bestows it on whom He pleases. It is not difficult to see that being alike

does not preclude some of them from being reserved for some especial favours. Of course, if Allah had pleased, He could have bestowed it on anyone among them, but He chose for this favour whom He pleased. The same was the thrust of their protest :against the Prophet

(Has the reminder been revealed to him from among us?" (۳۸:۸"

b) Of the same nature, but with added sarcasm, were the following remarks of the :polytheists of Mecca

And they say: "Why was not this Qur'an revealed to a man of importance in the two (towns?" (۴۳:۳۱

And they say: "What sort of apostle is this that he eats food and goes about in the marts; why has not an angel been sent down to him so that he be a warner with him? Or a treasure be thrown down to him, or be for him a garden from which he may eat!" ((۲۵:۷-۸

What they wanted to say was this: If the Apostle (of Islam) really has been chosen by God to receive divine revelation, then he must be someone above all the mortals. Then why does he require food to eat, and why is he obliged to go about in the ?markets to earn his livelihood

If he is truly a representative of God, he should have been accompanied by an angel to assist trim in his work, or he should have been given a treasure to save him the trouble of earning his livelihood in the markets, or a garden should have been bestowed

.on him, so that he would not need a food like ours

:Allah answered them in these words

See how they coin comparisons for thee! So they have gone astray, therefore they shall not be able to find a way . . . And We did not send before thee any messengers but they most surely ate food and went about in the markets; and We have made some of you a trial for others; will you bear patiently? And your Lord is Ever-seeing .((۲۵:۹,۲۰

And in reply to their demand for sending down an angel, it was said in another :chapter

And if We had made him angel, We would certainly have made him a man, and We .(would certainly have made confused to them what they make confused (۶:۹

:c) Going further, they raised their demands even higher

And those who do not hope for Our meeting, say: "Why have not angels been sent down upon us, or (why) do we not see our Lord?" Now certainly they are too proud of .(themselves and have revolted a great revolt (۲۵:۲۱

According to their thinking, there was no difference between them and the Prophet; all were human beings. Then why should he be reserved for this office of apostleship? They too should be visited by angels; or, even better, they should see the Lord. Allah :replied to them

On the day when they shall see the angels, there shall be no joy on that day for the guilty, and they shall say: "It is a forbidden thing

.(totally prohibited" (۲۵:۲۲

It means that if they persist in their disbelief, they shall not see the angels except at the time of death, and then they shall not find any joy in it. The same thing has been :mentioned in another verse

And they say: "O you to whom the Reminder has been revealed! you are most surely insane. Why do you not bring to us the angels if you are of the truthful ones?" We do .(not send the angels but with truth, and then they would not be respited (۱۵:۶-۸

d) This last verse shows us one more twist of their "arguments". The Prophet, according to their thinking, was truthful in his claim of revelation, but he was insane; whatever news he brought was a product of his unstable mind and was, therefore, :not correct. The same "argument" was put against Nūh (a.s.), as the Qur'an says

.(and they called (Nūh) mad, and he was driven away (۵۴:۹ . . .

These were the variations of their "arguments" against the claims of the Prophet, the arguments which were based on similarity of the prophets and their people in their .humanity

Second Method: It was to reject outright the claim of the prophets, and demand from them proof of their veracity, asking them to bring some signs to show that they were .in fact representatives of Allah and recipients of His revelation

The apostles and the prophets claimed a distinction which was intangible and unknowable to their people. They claimed that they were given apostleship

and /or prophethood; that they were spoken to by Allah - either directly or through angels. Now, such a claim could not be verified by any test or experiment. It could be :objected against in two ways

i) There was no proof that such a claim was true; (ii) there was proof that it was not) true. Revelation, divine speech, (and the resulting sharī`ah and religious discipline) could not be experienced by anyone other than the claimant; the normal system of cause and effect was against it. If such a claim were true, it would mean that the Prophet was in direct contact with the world beyond nature; he was tuned to the divine power - the power that can change the course of nature can make the effect .appear without their usual causes

In that case, he should be able to produce some another tangible super-natural effect; after all one super-natural event is like any other super-natural event so far as the divine authority is concerned. If Allah spoke to the Prophet - a super-natural effect - He should show on his hands some other tangible super-natural effects in order to prove the truth of his former claim, that is, the claim that he receives .revelation from God

If God wanted to guide the people aright by means of a super-natural thing, that is, revelation, then let Him prove the truth of His Prophet by means of another super-.natural, that is, miracle

That was why the people asked for miracles whenever a prophet

was sent to them. They wanted miracles to verify his claim of prophethood, and not to ensure the truth of his teachings. Suppose a man is sent by a ruler to his subjects with his commands and laws. He reaches his destination and they ask him for his .credentials

Will they be satisfied if, at this juncture, he starts explaining the wisdom underlying each rule and regulation? Certainly not. They will say: All that you have said, just shows that these rules are based on wisdom and meant for our good; but it does not prove in any way that they are from our ruler, nor that you are his deputy authorized .to manage our affairs on his behalf

We shall believe in your claim only when you show us a credential to this effect, for example, an appointment letter duly signed by the ruler and having his official seal. It :is as the polytheists had said to the Prophet

.(until you bring down to us a book which we may read" (۱۷:۹۳ . . ."

.From the above explanation, two things become abundantly clear

First: Miracle has an inseparable. Connection with the truth of the claim of prophethood. Learned and ignorant, elite and common, all men need miracle in order .to be able to accept the truth of a prophet's claim

Second: What the prophet receives and perceives of the revelation is entirely different from those things which we feel by senses or comprehend by intellect. In plain words, revelation is not a function of

."mind; it is a reality totally separate from "right thinking

This fact is brilliantly clear from the Book of Allah; and no one, having an iota of common sense, can entertain any doubt about it. But in recent times some "scholars" have closed their eyes from this reality, and tried to reinterpret the spiritual facts and .divine knowledge in the light of the natural sciences

They have, accordingly, based their explanations on materialistic theory. They believe that human perception and comprehension is a characteristic of matter, emanating from the brain. They are of the opinion that all real merits and perfections – whether of an individual or of a group – are developments of matter only. Based on these premises, they have explained prophethood and all related spiritual factors on the :following materialistic lines

Prophethood is a sort of a sharp mental power, an intellectual genius. The genius who is called prophet, looks at the social conditions of his nation; analyses what they have inherited of the beliefs, ideas, customs and superstitions; and then changes them to .conform with the needs of his time and place, in the most suitable manner

In that light, he frames for them the basic social principles and ordains practical rules and regulations – in order to raise their standard of life, to elevate their morality and ethics, to make them better members of society. Basing on this hypothesis, they have :declared that

۱) Prophet is an intellectual genius, who calls his people to the good of their social life.

۲)

Revelation is the good thought which comes into his mind.

۳) Divine book is the collection of those good thoughts and ideas, inasmuch as they are free from personal desires and selfish motives.

۴) Angels who, the prophet says come to him, are only the natural material forces which keep the world going. Or, they are psychological traits which lead the man to his perfection. The Holy Ghost is a higher development of those material forces, which rains those pure ideas on the prophet's mind.

Satan is a retrogression of the same material forces, which poisons the minds with evil thoughts and incites the people to anti-social deeds. In the same vein they have explained away all the realities which the prophets have told us about - like the Tablet, the Pen, the Throne, the Chair, the Book, the Reckoning, the Garden, and the Fire.

۵) Religions are products of times; they change with the times.

۶) The miracles, attributed to the prophets, are nothing more than myths and fictions; which were forged in the interest of religion, to strengthen the belief of common people; or to enhance the prestige of religious leaders in the eyes of their followers.

This in short is their explanation. But prophethood, in this meaning, should rather be called a political device than a divine reality. It is not possible here to throw light on its various facets. What the readers, however, should not overlook is that this interpretation has no resemblance whatsoever to what has been described in the Books

.of Allah and the Tradition of the prophets

What led these “scholars” to such interpretations was their total submission to materialistic theories; that was why they rejected every metaphysical reality, and tried to bring it down to the level of lifeless matter.

Such peoples are academic descendants of an earlier group: Many early theologians interpreted every religious reality - the Throne, the Chair, the Tablet, the Pen, the Angels etc. - in material terms, adding, at the same time, that those things existed beyond the grasp of our senses. Needless to say that that interpretation was not based on any actual experiment or sensual perception.

Now that the area of physical sciences has expanded so much, and every thing is being analyzed, tested and experimented on, this later generation was obliged to reject the idea of physical existence of those religious realities, because, as mentioned above, their existence could not be proved by any test or experiment.

Therefore, they had to invent other meanings for those realities, well within the area of sensual perception. They thought that they were serving the cause of religion in this way - because their interpretation would bring those realities within the sensual and physical recognition, and thus save them from being totally rejected by modern scholars.

Both groups have strayed from the right path. The ancient theologians correctly understood the meanings of these words, without resorting to any allegorical interpretation. But they erred when they thought that those were material things although beyond the purview of sensual perception, not

.subjected to the laws of matter

The modern scholars took the wrong way from the very start; they gave these words wrong meanings in their eagerness to make them conform to material realities; in .their attempt to pull these sublime truths down to the level of physical experience

The correct way is to explain these words according to the dictates of the language and the usage; then shall come the stage of identifying what, how and where, for example, the Pen is. This should be done with the help of other relevant verses. After the Pen is identified, it may be compared with current scientific ideas to check .whether it goes against them

If that examination reveals that the identified entity was beyond the domain of matter, then it should not be proved, or disproved, by the principles of physical .sciences. The science is concerned with material and physical things

What authority has it got to judge metaphysical or spiritual things? Can we allow a linguist to prove, or disprove, a proposition of astronomy by the rules of grammar? If not, then why should the rules of physical sciences be applied to prove, disprove or ?interpret metaphysical realities

Qur'an

But if you do (it) not - and never shall you do (it) -then be on guard against the fire of which men and stones are the fuel; it is prepared for the unbelievers. And convey good news to those who believe and do good deeds, that for them are gardens in which rivers flow; whenever they

shall be given a portion of the fruit thereof, they shall say: "This is what was given to us before;- and they shall be given the like of it, and they shall have pure mates in them; and in them they shall abide.

The chapter began with description of three groups: the pious ones, the disbelievers and the hypocrites. But then all of them were joined together by the words, "O men!", calling them to worship Allah.

In this context, they could be divided in two groups only: those who answered this call (i.e. the believers) and those who did not answer it (i.e. the disbelievers). The hypocrites do not come into this picture, probably because in their appearance they are with the first group, while in reality they are included in the second. Perhaps, that is why the previous designation of the first group (those who guard against evil) has been changed here for "those who believe."

is fuel. The verse says that man himself is the fuel of the hell. He is (الوَقود) "al-Waqud" his own fuel, to keep the fire burning, and to get himself burned in that fire. Allah says:

(then in the fire shall they be burned (۴۰:۷۲).

(It is the fire kindled by AllAh, which rises above the hearts (۱۰۴:۶-۷).

Man shall be burned in a fire that will be kindled and fueled by his own self.

The next verse, ۲:۲۵, runs parallel to it and we find the same principle at work here also: "whenever they shall be given a

portion of the fruit thereof, they shall say: `This is what was given to us before;' and they shall be given the like of it". It indicates that man shall get there only what he has .himself prepared here

The Prophet has said: "As you live so you will die, and as you die so you will be raised." But the people of the paradise have a pleasant distinction vis-à-vis the people of the :fire, because they shall be given ever-increasing rewards by their Lord

.(They have therein what they wish and with Us is more yet (۵۰:۳۵

Of which men and stones are the fuel": The stones referred to here are the idols . . ." :which the disbelievers worshipped. Allah says

.(Surely you and what you worship besides Allah are the firewood of hell . . . (۲۱:۹۸

they shall have pure mates in them": The adjective "pure", inasmuch as it qualifies . . ." the "mates", refers to purity from all such things as may create aversion and unpleasantness - whether in their bodies or in their ehavior. In other words, the mates given to the believers in paradise will be free from every disagreeable .characteristic or trait

Tradition

as-Sadūq narrates that as-Sadiq (a.s.) was asked about this verse and he said: "The ".pure mates are the ones who shall be free from menstruation and other excrements

The Author says: Some other Tradition have expanded the meaning to include .cleanliness from all defective traits, all characteristics causing aversion

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۲۶-۲۷

point

(۲۶) إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي أَن

يَضْرِبَ مَثَلاً مَّا بَعُوضَةً فَمَا فَوْقَهَا فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ فَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ فَيَقُولُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَـذَا مَثَلاً يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَمَا يُضِلُّ بِهِ إِلاَّ الْفَاسِقِينَ

(٢٧)الَّذِينَ يَنقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِن بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَن يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الأَرْضِ أُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

Surely Allah is not ashamed to set forth any parable - (that of) a gnat or anything above that; then as for those who believe, they know that it is the truth from their Lord, and as for those who disbelieve, they say: "What is it that Allah means by this parable?" He causes many to err by it and many He leads aright by it, but He does not cause to err by it (any) except the transgressors (٢۶),

who break the covenant of Allah after its confirmation and cut asunder what Allah has ordered to be joined, and make mischief in the land; these it is that are the losers (٢٧).

Commentary

Qur'an

Surely Allah is not ashamed. . . : Gnat or mosquito is one of the smallest animals perceptible by naked eyes. These two verses run parallel to verses ١٩ - ٢١ of ch. ١٣:

Is then he who knows that what has been sent down to you from your Lord is the truth like unto him who is blind? Only those possessed of understanding shall bear in mind, those who fulfil the promise of Allah and do not break the covenant, and those who join that which Allah

.has bidden to be joined, and fear Allah and fear the evil reckoning

The verse clearly shows that there is a straying, a blindness, which afflicts the man as a result of his evil deeds; it is different from that initial straying and blindness which the man opts for by his own free will. Look at the sentence, "but He does not cause to err by it (any) except the transgressors". They transgressed first, and it was only then .that Allah made them go astray

Guidance and misguidance are two comprehensive words; they encompass every felicity and infelicity that comes from Allah to His good and wicked servants respectively. As Allah describes in the Qur'an, He makes His good servants live a happy life, strengthens them with the spirit of faith, bring them out of the darkness into the light, and gives them a light by which they walk among the people; He has taken them under His protection and guardianship, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve; He is with them, answers them when they call on Him, and remembers them when they remember Him; and the angels come down to them with .good news of eternal peace

Diametrically opposed to it is the condition of evil-doers. Allah causes them to err, takes them out of the light into the darkness, sets a seal upon their hearts and hearings, and a covering over their eyes; He alters their faces turning them on their backs; places chains on their

necks and these reach up to their chins, so they have their heads raised aloft, and makes a barrier before them and a barrier behind them, then He covers them over so .that they cannot see

He appoints for them the Satans to become their associates, and they turn them away from the right path while they think that they are guided aright; those Satans make their misdeeds to seem good to them and they are their guardians; Allah leads them on by steps from whence they perceive not; and yet He respites them, but His plan is firm; He makes a plan for them and leaves them alone in their rebellion, blindly .wandering on

.These are some examples of the conditions of the two groups

On deeper consideration, it appears that man, in this world, lives two lives: there is this life which may be seen and perceived by all, and there is another life hidden behind this one; that hidden life is either good or bad - depending on his faith and deeds. Man will become aware of that hidden life when the veil of secrecy will be .removed after death. Then he will see himself in his true form

Further, it appears from the Qur'anic verses that man has had a spiritual life before the life of this world; and he shall have another life after this one. In other words, man has been given three lives - this life in this world is the second one, there was one

preceding it and there will be another following. The condition of the third life shall be .determined by that of this second life - which, in its turn, is governed by the first one

Many exegetes have explained away the verses about the first life; they say that it is only a literary style, which presents imaginary pictures as real facts. And as for the verses concerning the life hereafter, they too are misrepresented as allegories and metaphors. But both types of verses are too clear in this meaning to allow such .misinterpretations

We shall explain the verses about the first life under ch. ٧. As for the life hereafter, many verses show that the same good or bad deeds which man commits in this life, shall be returned to him, as their own reward or punishment, on the day of requital. :Allah has mentioned this fact in many verses

- and do not make excuses today; you shall be recompensed only what you did . . . (٦٦:٧));
- then every soul shall be paid back in full what it has earned, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly. (٢:٢٨١);
- then be on guard against the fire of which men and stones are fuel (٢:٢٤);
- Then let him summon his council, We too would summon the tormentors (of the hell) (٩٦:١٧-١٨));
- On the day that every soul shall find present what it has done of good and what it has done of evil . . . (٣:٣٠);
- they eat . . .

;(nothing but fire into their bellies . . . (۲:۱۷۴

.(surely they only swallow fire into their bellies . . . (۴:۱۰ . . . •

.There are many verses of the same import

:Then there is the verse ۵۰:۲۲, which by itself is enough to convince one of this principle

Certainly you were heedless, of it, but now We have removed from you your veil, so .your sight today is sharp

The words, “you were heedless of it”, indicate that there was something present in this world, to which the guilty one has not paid any attention; “removed from you your veil” means that, but for that veil, he could have seen that reality even in this worldly .life

What the man would see on the Day of Resurrection was present even in this earthly life; otherwise, it would not be logical to say that previously you were inattentive to it, or that it was hidden from your eyes, but now that the cover has been removed, you .may see it clearly

There is no allegory or metaphor in these verses. Try to explain in plain Arabic the principle which we have mentioned just now. You will not find a more explicit way than the one used in these verses. Then, how can they be explained away as allegories? -:The divine talk here points at two realities

First: Recompense: What a man will get in hereafter - reward or punishment, paradise or hell - shall be in recompense of the good or evil he would have done

.in this life

Second: Embodiment of the deeds: Many verses indicate that the good or evil deeds themselves turn into their own pleasant or unpleasant recompense. (Or, that the recompense is an inseparable concomitant of the deeds themselves.) It is hidden .from our eyes in this life, but we shall see it clearly on the day of reckoning

These realities are not really two. But we had to explain it in this way to bring it nearer .to the minds. The Qur'an too says that it uses similitudes to make people understand

"Qur’an: but He does not cause to err by it (any) except the transgressors:“al-Fisq transgression, sinfulness). It is the Qur'an that, first of all, used this word in its = الفِسق) the date = فَسَـقَت التّمره) now prevalent meaning. It is derived from fasaqati 't-tamrah .(broke out of its outer rind

That is why it has been further explained by the words, “who break the covenant of Allah after its confirmation” - a thing must be whole before it is broken. Also the transgressors are described at the end of the verse as the losers - one must be :owning a thing before he can lose it. Allah further says

Surely the losers are they who have lost themselves and their people on the .(resurrection day (۴۲:۴۵

the =الفاسقين) “ All these expressions show how appropriate the adjective, “al- fasiqīn .transgressors) is in this context

You should never think that the adjectives used by Allah in His book for His good servants (like

those who are near to Allah", "the sincere ones", "the humble ones", "the good ones","
"the purified ones" etc.) or for the evil ones (like "the unjust", "the transgressors", "the losers", "those who go astray", etc.) are cheap epithets, or that they are used as .literary embellishment

Each adjective has its own significance; each points to a particular stage in man's spiritual journey. Each has its own characteristics, and gives rise to its special effects and consequences. On physical level, every age has its own characteristics and powers, which cannot be found before or after that age; likewise, on spiritual plane, .every attribute has its own special effects

An Essay On Compulsion And Delegation

The sentence, "but He does not cause to err by it (any) except the transgressors", explains how Allah manages the actions of His servants. Does He compel them to act in a pre-determined way? Or, has He delegated to them all powers in this respect? It .is better to solve this knotty problem here and now, by the guidance of the Qur'an

:Allah says

- ;(Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allah's (۲:۲۸۴
- ;(His is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth (۵۷:۵
- .(to Him belongs the kingdom, and to Him is due (all) praise (۶۴:۱

These and other similar verses prove that to Allah belongs the whole universe; His ownership is unconditional and unlimited. A man owns a thing, let us say, a donkey; he .may use it and take its advantage to a certain extent only

For example, he

may ride it or use it as a beast of burden; but he cannot starve it to death, nor can he burn it alive. Why? Because his ownership is not absolute; society would condemn him if he were to commit such atrocities. His ownership allows him certain advantages .only; and not every possible use

But when we say that Allah is the Owner of the worlds, we mean absolute, real and unrestricted ownership. There is no owner except Allah; the things own, or control, for .themselves neither any harm nor any profit, neither life, death nor resurrection

It is only Allah who owns and controls every affair of every creature; He may do with them whatever He pleases; no one can ask Him why; He cannot be blamed or questioned for anything He does, because He is the absolute Owner. He has, of course, allowed some of His creatures to use some other things to a certain limits; but both the user and the used are His property; and the user cannot exceed the .authorized limit

Allah, as the absolute Owner, cannot be questioned about His dispositions; but others :have to give account of how they exercised their authority. Allah says

;(who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission? (۲:۲۵۵

;(there is no intercessor except after His permission(۱۰:۳

;(that if Allah please He would certainly guide all the people?(۱۳:۳۱ . . .

And if Allah please He would certainly make you a single nation, but He causes to err whom He pleases and

;(guides whom He pleases . . .(١۶:٩٣

;(And you do not please except that Allah please (٧۶:٣٠

He cannot be questioned concerning what He does and they shall be .(questioned(٢١:٢٣

Allah disposes and manages His property in any way He pleases; no one can use any other thing except with His permission, because He is the real Owner and Sustainer of .everything

Now we come to the rules and laws which Allah ordains for His creatures. He uses the same method which has been adopted by the human society - ordaining what is good and praising and rewarding its doers; forbidding what is bad and condemning and ,punishing its doers. For example

:He says

(If you give alms openly, it is well (٢:٢٧١

.(evil is a bad name after faith (۴٩:١١ . . .

Obviously, the laws ordained by Allah look at the good of man, and aim at perfecting :the human society. Allah says

answer (the call of) Allah and His Apostle when he calls you to that which gives you . . . ;(life (٨:٢۴

;(that is better for you, if you know (۶١:١١

Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good (to others) and the ;(giving to kindred, and He forbids indecency and evil and rebellion (١۶:٩٠

.(Surely Allah does not enjoin indecency (٧:٢٨

There are many such verses; and they show that the principles which the laws are based upon are always the same - be it a divine commandment or a human

legislation. What is good in itself and ensures the good of the

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society is allowed, enjoined and prescribed; and what is evil in itself and endangers the social structure is forbidden; man is praised and rewarded for doing the former, and blamed and punished for doing the later. Some of those principles are as follows:

People do whatever they do because of its underlying wisdom and good. Legislation of laws is no exception to this rule; the laws too are made because of their underlying good and benefit. They reward the law-abiding citizens and chastise, if they so wish, the law-breakers. The said recompense must be correlated to the action done - in its quantity and quality.

Also, it is accepted that the enjoinment and prohibition can be addressed to him only who is not under any duress or compulsion who has got freedom of will and choice. The above-mentioned recompense too is related to such actions only which emanate from free will and choice.

Of course, if someone, by his own action, puts himself in a tight corner, in a difficult position where he has to transgress a law, he may be justly punished for that transgression, and his plea of helplessness will not be heeded at all.

Allah uses these same principles in His dealing with His creatures. He does not compel the man to obey or to disobey the divine commands. Had there been any compulsion, rewarding the obedient ones with the paradise and punishing the disobedient ones with the hell would have been absolutely wrong: the reward would have been an unprincipled

venture, and the punishment an unmitigated oppression and injustice - and all of it is .evil according to reason

Moreover, it would mean favouring one against the other without any justification, without any cause - and this too is a demerit according to reason. Furthermore, it :would provide the aggrieved party with a valid argument against Allah; but Allah says

so that people should not have an argument against Allah after the (coming of) . . . ;(apostles (۴:۱۶۵

that he who would perish might perish by clear proof and he who would live might . . . .(live by clear proof (۸:۴۲

-:The above discourse makes the following points clear

First: Divine laws are not based on compulsion. These rules have been made for the good of man in this life and the hereafter. And they have been prescribed for him because he has freedom of will, he may obey the rule if he so wishes, and may disobey if he so chooses. He will be fully recompensed for whatever good or bad he .does by his free will

Second: There are things and actions which are not in conformity with the divine sanctity, yet the Qur'an attributes them to Allah, like misleading, deceiving, scheming against someone, leaving him wandering on in his rebellion, letting the Satan overpower the man and become his associate. All these actions are related to various .kinds of misleading and misguidance

But Allah is above all defects and demerits, and, therefore, these words when attributed to Him, should convey a meaning

in keeping with His sacred name. Initial misleading, even in the sense of making inattentive and forgetful, cannot be ascribed to Allah. What the above-mentioned :expressions actually mean is this

When someone by his own free will, opts to go astray, chooses the wrong path and commits sins, then Allah leaves him in that straying, and, thus, increases his error - it :is done as a punishment of his wrong choice. Allah says

He causes many to err by it and many He leads aright, by it, but He does not cause to .(err by it (any)except the transgressors (۲:۲۶

.(when they turned aside, Allah made their hearts turn aside (۶۱:۵ . . .

.(Thus does Allah cause him to err who is extravagant, a doubter (۴۰:۳۴

Third: The divine decree does not cover the actions of the man inasmuch as they are attributed to him - they are done by the doer, although not created by him. We shall .further explain it later

Fourth: Now that it has been seen that the divine law is not based on compulsion, it .should be clearly understood that it is not based on delegation of power either

How can a "master" issue an authoritative command if he has delegated all his powers to the servant. In other words, this theory of delegation negates the .comprehensive ownership of Allahvis-à-vis many of His possessions

Tradition

A great number of Tradition (narrated from the Imams of Ahlu 'l-bayt - a.s.) says: "There is neither compulsion nor delegation (of power), but (there is) a position

".(between these two (extremes

:It is reported in 'Uyūnu '۱-akhbar, through several chains

When the Leader of the faithful, 'Alī ibn Abī Talib (a.s.) returned from Siffīn, an old man (who has participated in that battle) stood up and said: "O Leader of the faithful! Tell "?us about this journey of ours, was it by Allah's decree and measure

The Leader of the faithful said: "Yes, O Shaykh! By Allah you did not ascend any elevation, nor did you descend to any valley but by a decree of Allah and by His measure." The old man, thereupon said: "I leave to Allah all my troubles (of this :journey), O Leader of the faithful!" ('Alī - a.s.) replied

Have patience, O Shaykh! Perhaps you take it to mean a firm decree and a com..." pulsory measure! If it were so, then there would be no justification of reward or punishment, no sense of command, prohibition or admonition, no meaning of promise or threat; there would not be any blame on an evil-doer nor any praise for a good-.doer

Nay, the good-doer would have been rather more deserving of blame than the evil-doer, and the evil-doer rather more worthy of grace than the good-doer. (Beware!) this is the belief of the idol-worshippers and the enemies of the Beneficent God (who .are) the Qadariyyah of this ummah and its Majūs

O Shaykh! Verily Allah ordained (the sharī'ah) giving freedom of will (to men) and prohibited (evil) to keep us on guard; and He gave plentiful (reward) on meager (deeds); and

He was not disobeyed by being overpowered, nor was He obeyed by compulsion; and He did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in vain; that is ".the opinion of those who disbelieve on account of the fire

The author says: The topics of the speech of Allah and His decree and measure were among the earliest about which the Muslims differed among themselves. This second :dispute may be described as follows

The eternal divine will govern everything in the universe. These things are transient in their quiddity; but when they do exist, they do so because the will of Allah decreed their existence - and in this way their existence becomes essential - otherwise, the .divine decree would be meaningless

Conversely, when a thing does not exist, it is because Allah did not decree its existence - and in this way its existence becomes impossible - otherwise, the divine will would be meaningless. In short, whatever exists, exists because Allah has decreed its existence, - thus turning it into an essential being. This principle applies .everywhere

But the difficulty arises when it comes to such a human action that issues from our own will and choice. We know that we can do it if we so desire, and can ignore it if we so wish. Their doing and not doing is equally possible to us. The balance is tipped in favour of either side by our own will and choice. Our actions are based on our choice, and

:our will brings them into existence. The difficulty that arises at this point is this

We have earlier seen that nothing comes into being without the will and decree of Allah, which turns the thing into an essential being – if so, then how can any action of ours be termed as “possible” one? It must exist because the divine will has decreed it! ?Moreover, how can our will affect it in any way when it is governed by the will of Allah

Also, in this background, it cannot be said that man had power to do a certain work before he did it. And, because he did not have that power, Allah could not give him any .order or command for or against that work

Going a step further, if Allah gave him an order and he did not comply, it would mean that Allah Himself had not wanted that thing to happen; so it was impossible for it to happen. Then the question would arise: How could Allah order him to perform an impossible task? Conversely, if someone complied with that order, it was because Allah Himself wanted it to happen. Then why should the man be rewarded without any ?valid reason

By the same reasoning, a sinner should not be punished, as it would be against justice, a naked oppression. One may go on enumerating the difficulties arising out of this subject. A large number of Muslims felt obliged to admit, and believe in, all these :absurdities. They said that

Man does

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not have power to do a work before the time comes to do it. The reason has nothing to do with the merit or demerit of any action. Whatever Allah does become good; and .whatever He forbids becomes evil

Accordingly, Allah may choose an action without any justification; He may give reward without any cause; He may ordain laws beyond the capacity of the doer or agent; He may inflict punishment on a disobedient servant even though the said disobedience .and transgression was not of his doing

It appears that the old man, who had asked the question, thought that the belief in the divine will and decree meant that there was no merit or demerit in any action and .(that man had no right of any reward (or punishment

Naturally he was disappointed when he heard that the journey was by the decree of Allah; that is why he said: "I leave to Allah all my troubles." What he meant was this: My journey to Siffīn and back and my fighting in the way of Allah had no benefit for me as it was governed and done by the will of Allah; my share in all this venture was only .the trouble and the inconvenience which I underwent

Therefore, I shall leave it to Allah to balance my account, as it was He Who put me through all these troubles. The Imam ('Alī) replied to him by saying, "If it were so, . . there would be no justification of reward or punishment

The Imam pointed to the rational principle on which the legislation is based. And at ". the end he reasoned that Allah did not create the heavens and the earth and what is .between them in vain

If Allah could will the man's actions in a way as to deprive him of his freedom of will and choice, it would mean that He could do things without any purpose and aim; then He could create the whole creation aimlessly and in vain. This in its turn would render .the principle of resurrection and reward and punishment invalid too

It is narrated in at-Tawhīd and 'Uyūnu 'l-akhbar that ar-Rida (a.s) was asked about compulsion and delegation, and he said: "Should I not teach you in this regard a principle by which you shall never differ (among yourselves), and no one will argue with you on this subject but that you shall defeat him (by it)?" We said: "(Teach it to us) ".if you so please

Thereupon he said: "Verily Allah is not obeyed through compulsion, nor is He dis-obeyed by overpowering; and He did not leave the servants remiss in His kingdom; He (still) owns what He has given into their possession, and has power on what He has .put into their power

Now, if the servants decided to obey Him, He would not prevent them from it, nor would he put any obstruction to it; and if they decided to disobey Him, then if He pleased to bar their way to it He would

do so, and if He did not hinder it and they committed it, then it was not He Who led them into that (sin)." Then the Imam said: "Whoever would accurately delineate the ".boundaries of this speech would surely overcome his adversary

the believers in compulsion) say = (المُجَبِّره "The author says: Why did "al-Mujabbirah what they said? It was because they pondered on the divine decree and measure, and it led them to the conclusion that when Allah decrees a thing it must happen .inescapably

Their deliberation of this subject was correct, and so was the conclusion arrived at. Where they fell in error was in correlating that conclusion with reality; they did not understand the difference between a reality and an idea based on subjective .approach; they forgot the distinction between essentiality and possibility

It is correct to say, on the basis of the divine decree and measure, that nothing happens in this world unless it turns an essential being; it is because everything and every affair comes into being when it is decreed by Allah, according to the measure prescribed by Him; and then it cannot fail to happen, otherwise the decree of Allah .would fail

At the same time, it should be kept in mind that a transient or possible thing becomes essential because of its sufficient cause. When looked at in conjunction with its sufficient cause, it would be called "essential"; but separated from that cause, it would .remain as it was before - a transient or possible thing

.Let us look at an action of man which he does by his free will and choice

When we look at it in relation to all things that are necessary to bring it into being - knowledge, will, proper tools and organs, the material, formal, efficient and final causes, and all the conditions of time and space - it will become an essential being; .and it is in this context that it become subject of the eternal divine will

In other words, it becomes an essential being when all aspects of its sufficient cause are complete. But, looked in relation to each of those aspects separately, it remains only a transient and possible thing. If it is seen vis-à-vis its efficient cause only, that is, in relation to the doer only, it will retain its characteristics of transience and possibility .- it will not become an essential being

It is now clear to see at which point the believers in "compulsion" have deviated from the right path. They thought that, inasmuch as the human action was subject to the divine will and decree, man had no power on it; he was not a free agent; he was .rather a helpless tool in divine hands

But they did not take into consideration the fact that the divine will takes it into hand .only when all aspects of its sufficient cause are complete, and not before that

The divine will decrees that a certain action be done by Zayd - not unconditionally, but on the condition that

it is done by Zayd's free will, at a certain time and a certain place. Therefore, its relation to the divine will itself demands that it should be an action of a free agent, .done by his own free will and choice

Doubtlessly, that action will be called an "essential" one if seen in relation to the divine will; but at the same time and by virtue of the same divine will, it will be a possible and .transient action when related to the doer, that is, the man

In other words, there are two wills - the human and the divine; they do not run parallel to each other; the divine will comes after and above the human will - they are .in a vertical, and not a horizontal position to each other

Therefore, there is no competition or collision between the two wills. It was a short-sightedness on part of the believers in compulsion to negate the human will in order .to establish the divine one

The Mu'tazilites said that human actions are done by man's free will. But they went to the other extreme, and fell in an error no less objectionable than that of al-Mujabbirah. They too said that if human action was subjected to the divine will man would not have any freedom of will and choice. And then they took a position diametrically opposed to that of al-Mujabbirah, and came to the conclusion that the .divine will had no relation whatsoever to the human action

Thus they had to

accept another creator - the man himself - for human actions. In this way, they accepted dualism without knowing what they were doing. Going further they fell into traps more harmful than the belief of al-Mujabbirah. As the Imam has said: “The poor al-Qadariyyah, they wanted to emphasize the justice of Allah, so they removed Him ” . . .from His power and authority

A master, showing kindness to one of his slaves, married him to a slave-girl of his; he bestowed on him a property, gave him a well-furnished house and provided him with all the necessities of life. Then there came some people there, looked at his property, :and began arguing among themselves. Someone said

Even though the master has given this property to his slave and has made him its“ owner, the slave has no right in, or authority over, this property at all. Does any slave ”.own anything? The slave together with all his belongings belongs to the master

Another said: “No. You are wrong. The master has bestowed on this slave the right of property. Now the slave is its absolute owner, and the master has lost all his rights, and authority over this property. We may say that he has abdicated in favour of his ” .slave

The former was the opinion of al-Mujabbirah; the later that of the Mu'tazilites. But both were wrong. The correct view would have been to say: The master has got his .status of mastership; the slave his position of servitude and bondage

.The master has made the slave owner of his (i.e., master's) property

The property belongs to the master at the same time that it belongs to the slave. There are two ownerships - one over the other. This is what the Imams of Ahlu 'l-bayt .(a. s.) have taught us to believe, and what the reason supports

Abayah ibn Rib'ī al-Asadī asked 'Alī, the Leader of the faithful, the meaning of' "capability". The Leader of the faithful asked a counter question: "Do you have that capability without God or with God?" When 'Abayah remained silent, he told him, "Tell "!me, O 'Abayah!" He said: "What should I say? O Leader of the faithful

He said: "You should say that you have got that capability by (grace of) Allah, to Whom it belongs and not to you. If He made you its owner, it would be of His bounties, and if He took it away from you, it would be a trial from Him; and He is the Owner of what He gave into your possession, and has power over what He put under your power. . ." ((al-Ihtijaj

.The author says: Its meaning may be understood from the preceding explanation

al-Mufīd reports in his Sharhu 'l-'aqa'id: It has been narrated from Abū 'l-Hasan, the third, (a.s.) that he was asked whether the actions of the servants were created by Allah. He (a.s.) said: "If He were their creator, He would not have disowned their .liability

:And He (Allah) has said

Verily, Allah is free from liability to

.(the idolaters . . . (۹:۳

It does not mean that Allah was not responsible for the creation of the idolaters; what ".Allah has disowned any responsibility of, is their idol worship and their evils

The author says: There are two aspects of a deed - its actual existence, and its relation to its doer. It is only when an action is seen in relation to its doer that it is called obedience or disobedience, good or bad, virtue or sin. So far as actual existence .is concerned, there is no difference between marriage and fornication

What distinguishes one from the other is the command of Allah - marriage conforms with the divine law, and fornication goes against that law. Someone is killed without any reason; another is killed by a lawful authority in reprisal of a murder. A teacher punishes an orphan in order to guide him aright; an oppressor hits at the same .orphan unjustly

In all these examples, the actual movements of the actions are identical. But one group is called sin because it does not conform with the divine law or goes against the .common weal of the society

:Allah says

.(Allah is the Creator of everything. . . (۳۹:۶۲

Every action is a "thing" inasmuch as it exists. And the Imam has said: "Whatsoever :may be called a thing is created, except Allah. . ." Also, Allah says

.(Who made good everything that He has created. . . (۳۲:۷

It may be inferred that everything is good because it is created. Creation and goodness

are inseparable factors. But at the same time, we see that Allah has named some :actions as evil. For example, He says

Whoever brings a good deed, he shall have ten like it, and whoever brings an evil .(deed, he shall not be recompensed but only with the like of it . . . (۶:۱۶۰

These are obviously the actions done by man; not the factor of recompense which cannot apply to divine actions. Such a deed is called sin. It is evil because it lacks something; because it is a nullification of a spiritual virtue or social good. In other words, a sin is sin because it is a negation, a non-being; otherwise it would have been .good

:Now, let us look at the following verses of the Qur'an

No misfortune befalls on the earth nor in your own souls, but it is in a book before We ;(bring it into existence. . . (۵۷:۲۲

No affliction comes about but by Allah's permission; and whoever believes in Allah, He ;(guides aright his heart . . . (۶۴ :۱۱

And whatever affliction befalls you, it is on account of what your hands have wrought, ;(and (yet) He pardons most (of your faults) (۴۲:۳۰

Whatever benefit comes to you, it is from Allah, and whatever misfortune befalls you, ;(it is from yourself (۴:۷۹

and if a benefit comes to them, they say: "This is from Allah;"- and if a misfortune . . . befalls them they say: "This is from you." Say: "All is from Allah;" but what is

the matter with these people that well-nigh they do not understand what is told .((them)? (۴:۷۸

On pondering upon these verses, it becomes clear that these misfortunes are relative evils. A man is bestowed with the bounties of Allah, like security and peace; health and .wealth, and so on; then he loses one or more of these bounties

This misfortune, in relation to that man, is evil because it has nullified some existing things, that is, the bounties which he had previously enjoyed. Thus, every misfortune is created by Allah, and at that stage it is not an evil. But it is an evil when seen in .relation to the man who loses an existing bounty because of it

Likewise, every sin is a negative factor, and as such, it is not to be attributed to Allah at all; though it may be attributed to Him from another angle, inasmuch as it happens .by permission of Allah

:al-Bazanti said

I told ar-Rida (a.s.) that some of our fellows believe in compulsion and some of them advocate the (belief of) capability. Thereupon he told me: "Write down (as I say): Allah, Blessed and High is He, has said: 'O son of Adam! By My will you have become such that you wish for yourself what you wish; and by My power you discharged the duties imposed by Me (on you); and by My bounty, you got power to disobey Me; I made you .hearing, seeing (and) powerful

Whatever benefit comes to you, it is from Allah; and

whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from yourself. And it is as it is because I have more right on your good deeds than you have yourself; and you are more liable to your sins than Me. And it is because I cannot be questioned concerning what I do and they shall be questioned. Thus, I have arranged for you everything that you want. . .' ("(Qurbu '۱-asnad

This, or nearly the same, tradition is narrated through other chains, of the Sunnīs as well as of the Shī'ahs. In short, the deeds that cannot be attributed to Allah, are the sins per se. It further explains the sentence of the preceding tradition:

"If he were their creator, He would not have disowned their liability . . . What Allah has disowned any responsibility of, is their idol-worship and their evils. . . "

Abū Ja'far and Abū 'Abdillah (a.s.) said: "Certainly, Allah is too Merciful to His creatures to compel them to sin and then to punish them for it. And Allah is too powerful for anyone to think that He would will a thing and it would not happen!"

(The narrator) said: "Then they (a.s.) were asked: 'Is there a third position between the (positions of) compulsion and (independent) capability?' They said: 'Yes, broader than (the space) between the heaven and the earth."' (at-Tawhīd)

Muhammad ibn 'Ajlan said: "I asked Abū 'Abdillah (a.s.) whether Allah has delegated (the authority of) the affair to the servants. He said: Allah is too honourable to delegate (the

authority) to them.' I said: 'Then has He compelled the servants in their deeds?' He said: Allah is too just to compel a servant on a deed and then to punish him for it.'” (.(ibid

In the same book Mihzam is reported as saying: “Abū 'Abdillah (a.s.) said: “Tell me what is that concerning which our followers (whom you have left behind) have differed among themselves.' I said: 'About the compulsion and the delegation?' He said: 'Then ask me about it.' I asked: 'Has Allah compelled the servants to (commit) '?sins

He replied: 'Allah is too overpowering to do it to them.' I asked: 'Then has He delegated (the authority) to them?' He replied: 'Allah has too much power over them to do so.' I asked: 'Then what is it (i.e., the correct position)? May Allah make your affairs right for you!'” (The narrator says:) “The Imam turned his hand twice or thrice, ”'.then said: 'If I were to answer you concerning it, you would not believe

The author says: "Allah is too overpowering to do it to them": Compulsion means that a force majeure subdues the subject in such a way that his power of action is nullified. “Too overpowering” (or, more overpowering than that) is the predominant will of Allah – He has willed that the action would emanate from the doer by his free will and choice, and this is what is actually happening in the world. The divine will has given the man freedom of will; neither the divine

.will negates the human will, nor the human will collides with the divine will

It is reported in at-Tawhīd that as-Sadiq (a. s.) said: “The Apostle of Allah said: 'Whoever thinks that Allah enjoins the evil and indecency, he tells a lie against Allah; and whoever believes that the good and bad (do happen) without the will of Allah, he ”'.removes Allah from His authority

It is reported that al-Hajjaj ibn Yūsuf wrote to al-Hasan al-Basrī, 'Amr ibn 'Ubayd, Wasil ibn 'Ata' and 'Amir ash-Sha'bī, asking them to describe what they had got (and what has reached them) in respect of (divine) decree and measure. al-Hasan al-Basrī wrote to him: “The best thing that has reached me is that which I heard the Leader of :the faithful, 'Alī ibn Abī Talib (a.s.) saying

Do you think that He Who has forbidden you has (also) acted cunningly against you?' Rather, your lower and higher (parts) have cunningly deceived you, and Allah is free from its liability.'” And 'Amr ibn 'Ubayd wrote to him: “The best thing I have heard about the decree and measure is the saying of the Leader of the faithful, 'Alī ibn Abī :(.Talib (a.s

If perfidy were in reality decreed, the perfidious man, if punished, would have been' oppressed.' ” And Wasil ibn 'Ata' wrote to him: “The best I have heard about the : (.decree and measure is the saying of the Leader of the faithful, 'Alī ibn Abī Talib (a.s

Do you think that He would guide you to the'

path and (then) obstruct you (from moving on)?' " And ash-Sha'bī wrote to him: "The best thing I have heard concerning the decree and measure is the word of the Leader :(.of the faithful, 'Alī ibn Abī Talib (a. s

Whatever you have to seek Allah's pardon for it, it is from you; and whatever you' thank Allah for it, it is from Him.' " When their letters reached al-Hajjaj and he studied (them, he said: "Certainly they have taken it from a clear spring." (at-Tara'if

It is narrated in the same book that someone asked Ja'far ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq (a. s.) about the decree and measure, and he replied: "Whatever you may blame the servant (of Allah) for it, it is from him; and whatever you cannot blame the servant (of :Allah) for it, it is the work of Allah. Allah will say to the servant

Why did you disobey? Why did you transgress? Why did you drink liquor? Why did you' fornicate?' This is, therefore, the work of the servant. But He will not say to him: 'Why were you sick? Why were you of short stature? Why did you become white? Why ".were you black?(He will not ask it) because it is the work of Allah

Alī (as.) was asked about monotheism and justice (of Allah), and he said: "Monotheism' is that you should not imagine Him; and justice is that you should not accuse Him." ((Nahju '۱-balaghah

The author says: There are numerous Tradition on this subject; but those

.quoted above throw light on all the aspects of the topic

The above-mentioned Tradition show various special methods of argument regarding .the subject matter

a) Some of them argue on the basis of legislation itself - order and prohibition; punishment and reward etc. - that man has freedom of will, without any compulsion or delegation of power. See, for example, the speech of the Leader of the faithful, 'Alī (as.), replying to the old man. It is similar to the argument we have inferred from the .words of Allah

b) Others bring in evidence the verses of the Qur'an which cannot be reconciled with :the theory of compulsion or delegation of power. For example

;(And Allah's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth (۳:۱۸۹

.(and your Lord is not in the least unjust to the servants (۴۱:۴۶

,Also, there is the verse

. (Say: “Surely Allah does not enjoin indecency” (۷:۲۸

Poser: A deed may be described as unjust or indecent if it is seen in relation to us. But when it is attributed to Allah it is not called unjust or indecent. Therefore, even if all “our” deeds were actually done by Allah, it would be perfectly right to say that He is .not unjust and does not enjoin indecency

Reply: The sentence seen in the context leaves no room for such misconceptions. The :complete verse is as follows

And when they commit an indecency they say: “We found our fathers doing this and Allah has enjoined it on us ” Say: “Surely Allah does not enjoin

"?indecency. Do you say against Allah what you do not know

Look at the sentence, "and Allah has enjoined it on us". The pronoun "it" clearly refers to the indecency committed by them; and it is the same deed which is referred to in the sentence, "Surely Allah does not enjoin indecency,". Allah does not enjoin what is termed as indecency in context of human activities; it does not matter whether in .other framework it is called indecency or not

c) A third type of reasoning is based on the divine attributes. Allah has given Himself many good names, and has described Himself with many sublime attributes, which .cannot be squared with compulsion or delegation of power

Allah is the Subduer, the Omnipotent, the Benevolent and the Merciful. These attributes can only be believed in if one believes that everything depends on Allah in its existence, and that its defects and shortcomings cannot be attributed to Him at all. (.(Refer to the Tradition quoted from at-Tawhīd

d) Yet others refer to seeking the pardon of Allah as well as to the blame which society directs at the wrong-doer. If sin were not from the man himself, there would have been no meaning in asking for divine pardon. If all our actions were done by Allah why ?should we be blamed for only some of them and not for the others

e) Lastly, there are the Tradition which explain the words, like causing to err, sealing :the hearts and misleading, when they are attributed to Allah

ar-Rida

a.s.) said explaining the words of Allah, and He (Allah) left them in utter darkness -) they do not see: “Allah is not described as leaving something as His creatures do. But when He knew that they would not return from disbelief and error, He held back His (help and grace from them and let them alone with their choice.” ('Uyunu '۱-akhbar

The same book narrates from the same Imam in explanation of the words of Allah, Allah has set a seal upon their hearts: “It is setting a seal on the hearts of the :disbelievers as a punishment of their disbelief, as Allah has said

nay! Allah has set a seal upon them owing to their disbelief, so they shall not . . . ”.(believe except a few (۴:۱۵۵

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said concerning the words of Allah, Surely Allah is not ashamed to set forth any parable. . .: ”This divine word answers those who think that Allah makes (His) ”(servants go astray and then punishes them for that straying . . . (۱

.The author says: Its meaning may be understood from previous explanations

A Philosophical Discussion

Every species is related to a particular type of action and reaction. In fact it is these special characteristics which identify the species as such. We looked at various kinds .of actions and reactions emanating from various groups

Our reason told us that there should be an efficient cause, an agent, to bring each kind of these actions and reactions into being. Therefore, we put every group in a separate

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Majma'u 'l-bayan -۱

category, identifying it as a species. When we compared human characteristics, for example, with those of an animal, and delineated them clearly, we decided that they were two different species, with different characteristics.

When the actions are seen in relation to their subjects, that is, the species, they are primarily divided into two categories:

First: The actions emanating from the nature – where the knowledge of their emanation has no effect at all on their existence. For example, the growth and nutrition of the vegetables; the movement of the bodies; our own health or illness.

These things are known to us, present in our own bodies; but our knowing or not knowing them has no effect whatsoever on their coming into being; they totally depend upon their doer – that is, nature.

Second: The actions issuing forth from the doer with his knowledge – where the said knowledge has a bearing on their being, like the intentional actions of the man and even of some animals. The doer does such an action after knowing and identifying it; and it is the knowledge and perception that gives him that insight.

The knowledge makes him realize what would constitute his perfection, and helps him in deciding whether a particular action would lead to that desired perfection. The knowledge distinguishes the means of perfection from other things; and this distinction helps the doer in choosing a particular course of action. And the action comes into being.

The activities based upon ingrained aptitude (like issuing forth of the required voices,

when a man speaks), as well as those emanating from natural disposition, or from the dictates of nature (like breathing) and, likewise, those springing from overwhelming grief or fear etc., do not require contemplation or meditation by the doer.

Why? Because there is not more than one form of knowledge here, and the doer does not have to delay his activity awaiting a final decision. Therefore, he does it immediately. But in other cases, where the doer has before his eyes two or more possible forms of knowledge to choose from, he has to spend at least a few moments in contemplation and deliberation.

For example, Zayd is hungry, and he gets a bread. Its one aspect is that it may satiate his hunger; but there may be other aspects too - it may be another man's property, it may be poisoned, it may have become dirty and so on. Zayd has to reflect whether the bread is legally, morally and hygienically fit for consumption. When he reaches a conclusion, the actions follows without any delay.

The first type of activities is called involuntary, like natural reactions; the second type is called voluntary, or intentional, like walking or talking.

The intentional actions, emanating from man's knowledge and will, are again divided into two categories:

First: When the man decides to do - or, not to do - a certain work, he may do so entirely on his own, without being influenced by any other fellow. In the example given above, Zayd may decide, on his

own, not to eat the bread because it was someone else's property; or he may eat it in .spite of that snag. This is called a deed done by man's free will

Second: When the man opts for a certain course of action under the influence of someone else. A tyrant may force a helpless person to act according to that tyrant's instruction under duress. The poor fellow in this condition commits sins and crimes .against his own will. This is called a deed done under compulsion

Right? But let us look at this second category more closely. We have said that this kind of deed results from the compeller's compulsion; he does not allow any freedom to the doer, who has to take the only way left open by the oppressor. But even then, it is .the doer himself who decides to proceed on that way

It is true that the major factor leading to this decision was the tyrant's compulsion; but it is equally true that the decision was taken by the doer himself, even though it was taken to save himself from the tyrant's oppression. In short, even the deeds done under compulsion are done by the will of the doer. It follows that the division of .intentional actions into these two categories is not real, not based on actual facts

The intentional action is the one which emanates from knowledge and a will that tips the balance in its favour. This reality is found in the deed done under compulsion

as well as in the one done by free will. It makes no difference that it was some other man's force or fear that tipped the balance in one case and the doer's own thinking .that did so in the other

A man sitting near a wall looks up to find that it was about to fall; overcome by fear he sprints away from that place. And we say that he did so by his own free will. Suppose, .a tyrant threatens to bull-doze the wall over him if he did not move away

Overcome by fear, he sprints away from there. And we say that it was done under compulsion. But the fundamentals in both cases are the same. The man is overcome by fear and decides to move away. So, why should we put them in two different ?categories

Objection: There is enough difference between the two actions to warrant their assignment to two different categories. The deed done by free will is based on its underlying wisdom (in the eyes of the doer); the doer deserves praise or blame, and gets reward or punishment, for it. All these factors are simply absent in the case of a .deed done under compulsion

Reply: It is true. But these factors are based on subjective approach of the society. They do not have any existence outside the imagination. By talking on these subjective approaches we have crossed the limits of philosophy. Philosophy deals with the things that exist in reality, as well as with

those things' natural characteristics. What all this leads to is the conclusion that the .discussion whether man is free in his actions is beyond the scope of philosophy

:We may yet bring it back on the track of philosophy from another direction

A transient (possible) thing has equal relation with existence and non-existence. It, therefore, needs a sufficient cause to tip the balance in favour of existence, so that it .may come into being

The transient thing, when related to its sufficient cause, becomes an essential being - it becomes impossible for it not to exist. That is why it is said that a transient does not .come into being unless it becomes an essential being

A transient, by its definition, must have a sufficient cause for its existence. A transient existing without its sufficient cause is a contradiction in terms. And that cause gives it .the essentiality, so long as it exists

Now look at the universe at a glance. You will find a chain made up of unnumerable links, all of which would be essential beings. In other words, not a single existing thing .could be called a transient, so long as it exists

But this "essential - ness" comes to it only when it is looked at in relation to its .sufficient cause

The sufficient cause may be a single thing or a compound of various causes - the material, the formal, the efficient and the final causes, plus the necessary conditions .of time and space as well as other preliminaries

An effect when related

to its sufficient cause must invariably exist – because the said cause would make it essential. But when seen with only a part of that cause, or if related to any outside .factor, it would not be essential; it would remain a transient as before

If a transient, on being related to only a part of its sufficient cause (e.g., to its efficient cause only) become essential and come into being, its sufficient cause would be .superfluous; and it would be a contradiction in term

It shows that in this natural world two systems are found simultaneously: one of essentiality and the other of transiency. The system of essentiality covers the sufficient causes and their effects – there is no transiency in any part of this world, neither in any person nor in any action. The system of transiency permeates the .matter and its potentialities when related to only a part of the sufficient cause

Take any human action; if it is related to its sufficient cause – man (the efficient cause), knowledge and will (the final), matter (the material) and its shape (the formal) plus all conditions of time and space including removal of every hindrance – it would become essential. But if it is seen in relation to only its efficient cause, that is, man, it .would remain transient

Finally, it should be pointed out that the transient things need a cause for their existence because of their transiency. And this need would not end until the chain of cause and effect

finally reaches a cause Who is the Essential Being. This observation leads to the :following two conclusions

First: The need of an effect for its cause does not end on its being related to its transient cause. The need continues until it reaches the Final Cause, the Essential .Being

Second: This need emanates from its transient nature. It needs a cause to bring it into existence with all its characteristics and traits, including its relationship with its various .causes, fulfilling all the conditions of its existence

Now we may ponder upon the question of compulsion and delegation of power, :keeping in view the above-mentioned premises

First: No delegation of power: Man, like all other things and their actions, depends on the will of Allah, for his existence. In the same way, man's action depends on the will of Allah in its existence. Therefore, the Mu'tazilites' view - that human actions have no relation at all to the divine will - is completely baseless. There was no reason at all for .them to deny the decree and measure of Allah in respect of the man's actions

Second: No compulsion: This relation to the will of Allah, inasmuch as it is concerned with existence, keeps all the characteristics of the created thing in view. Every effect emanates from its cause - with all its characteristics which have any bearing on its .existence

A man's creation is attributed to Allah, keeping in view all its intermediary causes and condition - the father, the mother, the time, the place, the

.features, the quantity, the quality and a lot of other concomitants

Likewise, the action of man is attributed to Allah, keeping in view all its characteristics and conditions. When a man's action is attributed to Allah and His will, it does not cease to be the man's action; it is still caused by the said man's will. The will of Allah decrees that the action be done by the man emanating from the man's own free will .and choice

Therefore, it would be a contradiction in term to say that the action was no longer done by man's free will because it was related to the divine will. Allah Himself has decreed it to be a work of the man by his free will; how can it be said that the divine will lost its effectiveness and the action happened without the man's free will? It is now clear that the view of al -Mujabbirah - that the human action's relation to the .divine will nullifies its relation to the human will - is absolutely devoid of truth

The above discourse shows that the said action has a relation to the human will and a relation to the divine will; neither relation nullifies the other, because each is .connected with the other vertically, not horizontally

Third: The human action, when related to its sufficient cause; becomes essential. But seen in relation to only a part of the sufficient cause, it remains transient. For ,example, when the action is related to only its sufficient cause

.that is, man, it does not become essential, but remains transient as before

Therefore, what a group of modern materialist philosophers have said – that the whole system of nature is permeated by compulsion, and there is no free will at all in the universe – is totally wrong. As we have said, all effects in relation to their sufficient .causes are essential, but, when related to only a part of the said causes, are transient

And it is the foundation on which man's life is based. A man teaches and trains his child and then hopes that his efforts would bear fruit. If there was no freedom in the world, if everything was essential and had to happen anyhow, then all this teaching and training would be of no earthly use; there would remain no place for hope in human .life

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۲۸-۲۹

point

(۲۸) كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

(۲۹) هُوَ الَّذِى خَلَقَ لَكُم مَّا فِى الأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى إِلَى السَّمَاء فَسَوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

How do you deny Allah and you were dead and He gave you life? Again He will cause .(you to die and again bring you to life; then you shall be brought back to Him (۲۸

He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth, and He directed Himself to the .(heaven, so He made them complete seven heavens; and He know all things (۲۹

General Comment

The talk reverts again to the initial topic. The beginning

of the chapter dealt with three categories of mankind; then all were addressed together (verses ٢١-٢٧) with the words, "O men", Now these verses describe the same .subject with a grater detail

The twelve verses, starting from here, depict the reality of man; show the potentialities of perfection which Allah has endowed him with; delineate the vast scope of his inner being; describe the various stages - death and life, and again death and life; then the return to Allah - through which he passes in his journey, explaining .that the final destination is Allah

In this context, the verses describe some basic bounties of Allah upon him - creative as well as legislative. He created for him all that is, in the earth and made the heaven subservient to him. He made him His deputy on the earth, ordered the angels to prostrate before him, put the first man into the Garden, opened for him the door of repentance and enhanced his prestige by guiding him to His worship. In this background, the opening words, "How do you deny Allah", serve to emphasize the .grace and bounty of Allah on man

Commentary

:Qur'an: How do you deny Allah . . . you shall be brought back to Him

:The verse is somewhat (though not exactly) similar to the verse ٤٠:١١

They shall say: "Our Lord! twice didst Thou give us death, and twice hast Thou give us ?life, so we do confess our faults; is there then a way to get out

This (later) is one

intervening period or life) between this =البرزَخ) of the verses that prove an al-barzakh world and the next. It says that Allah gives death twice. First is the death that .transfers us from this world

But when and where shall we be given the second death? Giving of death presupposes a preceding life. It means that man shall be given a life in the period intervening between this first death and the Day of Resurrection. This argument is .solid, and it has been offered in some Tradition too

Question: Both verses have exactly the same connotation. Both mention two deaths and two lives. According to the verse ۲:۲۸, the stage before the life of this world has been called the first death. Then comes the first life in this world, followed by the second death transferring the man to the next world, and lastly will come the second .life on the Day of Resurrection

The second verse (۴۰:۱۱) too should be interpreted in the same way, because both have the same import. It means that after the death of this world, there is no life .before the Day of Resurrection

Reply: It is wrong to say that the two verses have the same connotation. The verse ۲:۲۸ mentions one death, one causing to die and two givings of life; while the verse ۴۰:۱۱. is talking about two givings of death and two givings of life

There is a world of difference between "death" and "causing to die". "Causing to die" ;shows a preceding life

while “death” can be used just for absence of life – even when there was no life before .it

The verse ۴۰:۱۱ refers to the death after this life, then the life of the intervening period, then the death after that, and finally to the life on the Day of Resurrection. The verse ۲:۲۸ on the other hand, refers first to the lifeless state (“death”, and not “causing to die”) before coming to this world, then goes on mentioning this life, then death and then the life of the intervening period. There will be some delay before man is .returned to his Lord

then) denotes some delay. Its use here supports = ثُمَّ) ”The conjunctive used “thumma this explanation because after the life of the intervening period there shall come .again a death and only then the man shall be returned to Allah

Qur’an: and you were dead and He gave you life: It shows the reality of man and his existence. He is a being, ever-changing, ever proceeding on his path of perfection, step by step, stage by stage. Before coming into this world, he was dead, then he was made alive by Allah and came here; again he will be caused to die and then be made .alive again

:Allah says

• and He began the creation of man from dust. Then He made his progeny of an . . . extract, of water held in light estimation. Then He made him complete and breathed . . . into him of His spirit

;(۳۲:۷-۹)

- then We did grow it into another creation; so blessed be Allah, the best of the . . . ;(creators (۲۳:۱۴

- And they say: "What! when we have become lost in the earth, shall we then indeed be in a new generation?" Nay! they are disbelievers in the meeting of their Lord. Say: "The angel of death who is given charge of you shall cause you to die, then to your ;(Lord you shall be brought back" (۳۲:۱۰-۱۱

- From it We created you and into it We shall send you back from it will We raise you a .(second time (۲۰:۵۵

The verses will be explained when we shall come to them; they have been quoted here only to show that man is a part of the earth, he was created from it, gradually developed until he grew into "another creation"; this "another creation" proceeds on the path of his perfection; then the angel of death completely removes this "man" .from the body; and he returns to Allah. This is the path which the man has to take to

The divine decree has planned the universe in such a way that every thing is related to every thing else; there is a constant action and reaction between it and the rest of the creation. Man too influences, and is in turn influenced by, all that exists in the earth and in the heavens - the elements and their characteristics, the animal world, the vegetable world, the minerals, the water, the air

.and, in short, every creation of nature

The fact is that the scope of man's activities is much greater, and his circle far bigger than anything else's. He has been given thinking and reasoning powers, and, as a result of this unique gift of Allah, he influences the other creatures, manages them, arranges and rearranges them, manipulates them, destroys them, amends them and perfects them, on a scale unheard of outside his circle. Every creature is under his .domain

Sometimes he imitates nature by creating synthetic items for his needs; at other times he sets some forces of nature against the others. In short, he obtains, by all possible means, whatever he wants from whatever he wants. Passage of time has further strengthened his hands; now he has deeper insight in the working of nature, .and manipulates the system even more effectively

That is so that Allah may establish the reality by His words, and so that the truth of His :speech may be seen even more clearly

And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is .(in the earth, all, from Himself (۴۵:۱۳

:The verse following the verse under discussion, that is, ۲:۲۹, states the same fact

He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth, and He directed Himself to the .heavens, so He made them complete seven heavens

The context - description of the bounties of Allah bestowed on man - shows that it was for the benefit of man that Allah directed Himself

(!to the heavens and made them complete seven. (Ponder on the point

This is the path taken by the man in his journey of existence; and this is the imprint of his activities on the universe; it shows where he began from and what his final destination is.

Man's life in this world originates from nature, as the Qur'an confirms. But the same book declares also that this very life emanates from Allah:

;(and indeed I created you before, when you were nothing (۱۹:۹ . . .

.(Surely He it is Who originates and returns (۸۵:۱۳

Man is a creature that is brought up in the caressing fold of creation, gets his nourishment from the breast of production, and is connected on this level with life-less nature. But, on the level of origination, he is related to the command of Allah, to His authority:

His command, when He intends anything, is only that He says to it, “Be”, and it is ;((۳۶:۸۲

.(Our word for a thing when We intend it, is only that We say to it, “Be”, and it is (۱۶:۴۰

This much about genesis. As for the return journey, the path divides in two: the path of happiness, and that of unhappiness.

The path of happiness is the shortest route, leading the man to the sublime spiritual heights. It keeps raising his status and enhancing his rank until it takes him to the divine nearness. The path of unhappiness, on the other hand, is a long route that keeps demeaning and debasing him rendering him lowest

.of the low, until he reaches the divine presence

.(And Allah encompasses them on every side (۸۵:۲۰

;This subject has been fully explained under the verse

.(Guide us to the straight path (۱:۶

This was a short description of man's path. Details about his life in this world, and before and after it, will be given in their proper place. The verse under discussion is not concerned with those details; it makes only a passing reference to it as it has .some bearing on guidance and misguidance, happiness and unhappiness

He made them complete seven heavens: We shall write about the heavens in Chapter .۳۲ (as-Sajdah), God willing

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۳۰–۳۳

point

(۳۰) وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّکَ لِلْمَلائِکَهِ إِنِّی جَاعِلٌ فِی الأَرْضِ خَلِیفَهً قَالُواْ أَتَجْعَلُ فِیهَا مَن یُفْسِدُ فِیهَا وَیَسْفِکُ الدِّمَاء وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِکَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَکَ قَالَ إِنِّی أَعْلَمُ مَا لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

(۳۱) وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الأَسْمَاء کُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلائِکَهِ فَقَالَ أَنبِئُونِی بِأَسْمَاء هَؤُلاء إِن کُنتُمْ صَادِقِینَ

(۳۲) قَالُواْ سُبْحَانَکَ لاَ عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلاَّ مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّکَ أَنتَ الْعَلِیمُ الْحَکِیمُ

(۳۳) قَالَ یَا آدَمُ أَنبِئْهُم بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ فَلَمَّا أَنبَأَهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُل لَّکُمْ إِنِّی أَعْلَمُ غَیْبَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا کُنتُمْ تَکْتُمُونَ

And when your Lord said to the angels, “Verily I am going to make in the earth a vicegerent”; they said: “wilt thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood while we celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness?” He said: “Surely I know .(what you do not know” (۳۰

And He taught Adam the names, all of them, then presented them to

.(the angels and He said: "Tell Me the names of those if you are right" (٣١

They said: "Glory be to Thee! We have no knowledge but that which Thou hast taught .(us; surely Thou, Thou (alone), art the knowing, the Wise" (٣٢

He said: "O Adam! Inform them of their names. And when he had informed them of their names, He said: "Did I not say to you that I surely know the unseen (secrets) of the heavens and the earth and (that) I know what you manifest and what you were .(hiding?" (٣٣

Commentary

The verses tell us why the man has been sent to this world, what is the significance of his appointment as the vicegerent of Allah in this earth, what are the characteristics and special features of this vicegerency. Unlike other Qur'anic stories, it has been told .in one place only, that is, in these verses

Qur'an: And when your Lord said: We shall explain in vol. IV, what the "speech" or ."saying" means when it is attributed to Allah, to angels and to the Satan

Qur'an: they said: "Wilt thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it . . . and extol Thy holiness?": The angels heard the announcement, "I am going to make in the earth a vicegerent", and at once arrived at the conclusion that the wouldbe vicegerent would make mischief in the earth and shed blood. Apparently they understood the ."ultimate behaviour of the said vicegerent from the words, "in the earth

A vicegerent appointed

in the earth would certainly be created from material components; he would necessarily be bestowed with two basic traits of desire and anger; the earth is a place of unceasing struggle and constant confrontation; its resources are limited, its opportunities finite; but the proposed vicegerent's desire would be unlimited, infinite. .The condition of the earth and earthly things was hardly reassuring

Its creatures were subjected to ever-continuing deterioration and disintegration; its good was always turning into bad; it was a place where an individual could not live without a group having similar characteristics and traits. Keeping all this in view, the angels at once understood that what Allah intended to create was not only an .individual, but a species

The members of that species would have to live together, cooperating with one another; that is to say, they would have to establish a society, a social order. And with .a venture like this, they were bound to cause mischief and to shed blood

On the other hand, they knew that vicegerency - setting one thing in place of another - was unthinkable unless the vicegerent were a true copy of his predecessor in all the .characteristics, traits and intrinsic abilities

The proposed earthly creature was to be made vicegerent of Allah in the earth. Allah has got for Himself the best names, the sublime attributes; His mercy and power are beyond the comprehension of His creatures; He, in His person, is untouched by any defect; and, in his actions, is free from all kinds

.of evil and disorder

How could an earthly vicegerent, with all his defects and deficiencies, represent the majesty and splendour of Allah in the earth? Well, could a lowly creature of earth be a ?mirror of divine beauty and sublimity

This was their question – and it was no more than a question. It was not a protest, not an objection; they actually wanted to know the truth. They later asserted their belief .that Allah was the Knowing, the Wise

They believed that what Allah intended to do was based on knowledge and wisdom; and their question was put in order to learn the underlying wisdom of the decision of :Allah. What their question – or, pleading – amounted to was as follows

Allah intends to appoint a vicegerent in the earth; in order that the said vicegerent should represent Allah by celebrating His praise and glorifying His holiness through his worthy presence. But his earthly nature would not let him do so; it would irresistibly .pull him towards mischief and wickedness

So far as the main purpose of this vicegerency – celebrating Allah's praise and glorifying His holiness – is concerned, we are already doing it. Therefore, we are Allah's de facto vicegerents; and if Allah wishes, He may bestow upon us this designation. What is the need, then, of a new creation to act as vicegerent of Allah in ?the earth

For the reply, Allah used a sentence, “Surely I know what you do not know”, and an action, “And He taught Adam the

names, all of them.”

The context shows that:

First: The vicegerent was to get the vicegerency of Allah; he was not to become a successor of any earthly creature that had preceded him. If Allah had wanted the man to take the place of that previous creature, the reply, “And He taught Adam the names, all of them”, would be quite irrelevant.

Assuming that man was given vicegerency of Allah, this prestige would not be restricted to the person of Adam only, his descendants too would be vicegerents of Allah in the earth. Adam was taught the names; in other words, this knowledge was ingrained in human being in such a manner that, since that first day, it has been constantly bearing newer, fresher and better fruits; whenever man gets a chance, he discovers new avenues of knowledge; and thus he always finds himself imbued with previously unknown potentialities that more often than not turn into real achievements. It is a never ending process; it is a wonder that will not cease, and ever-fresh insight that will never fail to astonish.

That this assumption is correct, and the whole mankind is vicegerent of Allah, is evident by the following verses:

And remember (O people of 'Ad!) when He made you successors of Nūh's people . . . (۷:۶۹));

Then We made you successors in the land after them . . . (۱۰:۱۴);

. . . and He makes you successors in the earth (۲۷:۶۲).

The word translated here as “successor” is the same that has been translated as “vicegerent””

.in the verse under discussion

Second: Allah did not say that the vicegerent-designate would not cause mischief and bloodshed; nor did He reject the plea of the angels that they celebrated His praise and extolled His glory. By this silence, He confirmed that the angels were right on both .counts. But then He made manifest one thing which the angels were not aware of

He showed them that there was a matter which they could not shoulder the responsibility of, while this proposed vicegerent could do so. Man was entrusted with a divine secret which the angels, in their nature, were unable to know or understand. And that divine gift would more than compensate the ensuing mischief and .bloodshed

Allah told them, first, that surely He knew what they did not know. Then He referred to the same reply by telling them: "Did I not say that I surely know the unseen (secrets) of the heavens and the earth?" Looking at the intervening sentences it may easily be ."understood that the "unseen (secrets)" refer to "the names

It does not refer to Adam's knowledge of those names. The angels were unaware of even the existence of these "names"; it was not that they knew about the names but .were not sure whether Adam knew them or not

Had the angels been doubtful only about Adam's knowledge of the names, it would have been enough to tell Adam to inform the angels of the names in order that they .would have known that Adam knew

Instead, Allah

first asked them to tell Him “the names of those”. The angels had claimed the vicegerency of Allah for themselves, and had hinted that Adam was not fit for it; but the essential qualification for the vicegerency was the knowledge of the names; therefore, Allah asked both candidates about the names; the angels did not know .them, and Adam knew; it proved that he had the qualification while they lacked it

The question (about this knowledge) addressed to the angels ends with the clause, “if you are right”; it means that they had claimed a position, essential qualification of .which was this knowledge

Qur’an: And He taught Adam the names, all of them, then presented them to the :angels

The Arabic pronoun, “them”, used in “then presented them”, is made for rational beings, those who have life, sense and understanding. Obviously, the names (or, the named ones) were some living and sensible being who were hidden behind the curtain .”of the “unseen

It follows that the knowledge given to Adam of their names was something totally different from what we understand from the knowledge of names. Merely knowing the names (in the sense known to us) has no distinction; otherwise, the angels too would have become equal to Adam in this respect as soon as they heard those names .from Adam

Also, there would have been no distinction for Adam in such a knowledge. The angels could rightly complain to Allah that He taught those names to Adam, but kept them ((i.e. the angels

in dark; had He taught them too, they would have been equal to, if not better than, Adam! Understandably, such favouritism could not have silenced the angels. Surely, it .was something deeper then merely knowing all the names

It would not have been a convincing argument for Allah to teach Adam a dictionary and then put it as an evidence against the angels – the honoured servants who do not precede Him in speech and who act according to His commandment only – telling them to inform Him of the words which they had not been taught, and which the .mankind was to invent in future

Moreover, the only purpose of language is to convey the feelings and ideas to the hearer; but the angels do not need any language for this purpose; they convey and receive the ideas directly without the medium of words; their stage is far higher than .that of human beings in this respect

However, it is clear that the knowledge of the names which the angels got after hearing them from Adam was not the same as Adam had got by teaching of Allah – the inferior knowledge of the names they could grasp, but not the superior one which .qualified Adam for vicegerency of Allah

Adam deserved the vicegerency because he was given the knowledge of the names, and not because he informed the angels of those names. That is why they declared, ."“Glory be to Thee! We have no knowledge but that which Thou hast taught us

They accepted that they did not possess that knowledge.

The above discourse leads us to believe that Adam was taught the names of the named ones in such a way that he clearly knew their reality and recognized their substantial existence; it was not merely knowing the semantic value of a noun.

The named ones were substantial realities, the actual beings that were, at the same time, hidden behind the curtain of the unseen (secrets) of the heavens and the earth. This especial knowledge could be learnt only by an earthly human being, but was quite incomprehensible by a heavenly angel. And this knowledge had an intrinsic bearing upon vicegerency.

“'al-Asma ” (الأسماء = the names), in the sentences, “And He taught Adam the names”, is a plural with the definite article “al” (the) prefixed to it. Grammatically, it denotes generality, comprehensiveness; and it is followed by the emphatic, “all of them”.

Clearly, Adam was taught all the names of every named thing, without any restriction or limitation. As described earlier, the pronoun, “them”, in the clause, “then presented them to the angels”, shows that every name, that is, the named one, was a living being having knowledge and intellect; and at the same time, he was in the curtain of the unseen - the unseen of the heavens and the earth.

“The unseen of the heavens and the earth”: It is a genitive case. Somewhere else this phrase may mean the unseen parts of the heavens and the earth. But in this verse,

where Allah intends to demonstrate His perfect and comprehensive power, and to show the deficiency and incapability of the angels, it must mean a secret which is unseen to all the worlds, to all the heavens and the earth; an unseen beyond the .sphere of the universe

If you look at all the particulars of this verse – that "the names" denotes generality, that the named ones were alive and had knowledge, and that they were unseen to the heavens and the earth – you will agree that it perfectly fits on the theme of the ,verse ۱۵:۲۱

And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it and We do not send it down .but in a known measure

Whatever is called a thing – whatever is "named" a thing – Allah has its vast treasures, ever-lasting, never-ending, unmeasured by any measure, unlimited by any limit. .Measure and limit come to it when it is created and sent down

The vastness of these treasures is not of the same kind as the multiplicity of number, because a number, no matter how large, is by definition measured, limited and quantified. The said treasures are vast in their ranks and grades. (We shall further (.explain it in Chapter ۱۵

The named ones who were presented before the angels were sublime beings, who were well-protected by Allah, hidden in curtains of the unseen. He sent them down to the universe with their blessings and benefactions, and created all that is in the heavens

and in the earth from their light and splendour. Although they had numerous identities, they were not different in their number or in their persons; whatever .difference there was, it was in their ranks and grades

Qur'an: and I know what you manifest and what you were hiding: The sentence stands face to face with the mention of the unseen (secrets) of the heavens and the earth. Probably it refers to those things which are the parts of the heavens and the earth; and in this way both sentences together cover all unseen things – those which are beyond the sphere of the heavens and the earth together with those which are .within that sphere

Instead of saying "and what you hide", Allah said, "and what you were hiding". This changed style shows that there was something hidden especially in respect of Adam and his appointment as vicegerent. Probably it was the incident described in the next :verse

the angels) prostrated except Iblīs. He refused and he showed arrogance, and he) . . ." ."was one of the unbelievers

It shows that Iblīs was an unbeliever before then, and that his refusal to prostrate had sprung from that disbelief, which he had kept hidden upto that moment. Obviously, the prostration of the angels and the refusal of Iblīs had happened after Allah had told them, "Surely I know what you do not know", but before He said to them, ". . . I know what you manifest and what you were hiding" (i.e. the

unbelief kept secret by Iblīs). It also explains the reason why the former sentence was .”changed to, “I surely know the unseen (secrets) of the heavens and the earth

Tradition

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: “The angels could not know what they said (Wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood),if they had not (earlier) seen (someone who had made mischief in it and shed blood.” (at-Tafsīr, al-'Ayyashī

The author says: This tradition may be pointing to an earlier creature that inhabited the earth before the mankind, as some other Tradition say. It is not against what we have said that they understood it from the very words of Allah: Verily, I am going to make in the earth a vicegerent; rather the tradition and our explanation are .complementary

The tradition, without putting it in the framework of our explanation, would show that the angels too, like Iblīs, had committed the folly of unauthorized analogy - a very .objectionable practice

Zurarah said: “I visited Abū Ja'far (a.s.) and he asked (me): 'What do you have of Shī'ah Tradition?' I said: 'I do have a large number of it; and I was thinking of kindling a fire to burn them in it.' He said: 'Hide it (somewhere), you will (naturally) forget what you :(are not familiar with.' ” (Zurarah said

Then, I thought about the mankind (and asked him about them). He said: 'How did the“ angels get their knowledge when they said, Wilt Thou place in it such as shall

'?make mischief in it and shed blood

Zurarah further reports that whenever Abū 'Abdillah (a.s.) mentioned this tradition, " he said: "It is a shattering blow against al-Qadariyyah (i. e. those who say that man is ".(completely independent of Allah in his actions

Abū 'Abdillah (a.s.) further said: "Adam (a.s.) had, in the heaven, a friend from among the angels. When Adam got down from the heaven to the earth, the angel felt lonely; .he complained (of it) to Allah and sought His permission

Allah allowed him and he came down to him (Adam); he found him (Adam) sitting in a desolate region. When Adam saw him, he put his hand on his head and cried aloud." Abū 'Abdillah (a.s.) said: "They narrate that (it was such a loud cry that) all the .creatures heard it

The angel told him: 'O Adam! I do not see but that you have disobeyed your Lord and put on yourself a burden beyond your strength. Do you know what Allah had told us about you, and (what) we had said in His reply?' (Adam) said: 'No.' (The angel) said: ."'Allah told us, "I am going to make in the earth a vicegerent

We said: "Wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood?" Thus, He created you to place you in the earth. Could it be right for you to stay in the heaven?' " Abū 'Abdillah (a.s.) said: "Allah in this way consoled Adam for three days." (.(ibid

The author says: The

tradition shows that the Garden of Adam was in the heaven. Other Tradition on this .subject will be given later

In the same book, Abū 'l-'Abbas is quoted as saying that he asked Abū 'Abdillah (a.s.) about the words of Allah, And He taught Adam the names, all of them, (and enquired) as to what Allah had taught him. (The Imam) said: “The earths, the mountains, the canyons and the valleys.” Then he looked at the rug which he sat upon and said: “And ”.this rug is among the things which He taught him

It is reported in the same book that al-Fudayl ibn al-'Abbas asked Abū 'Abdillah (a.s.) what were the names which Allah taught Adam. He replied: “The names of the valleys ”.and the vegetables and the trees and the mountains of the earth

The same book narrates from Dawūd ibn Sarhan al-'Attar that he said: “I was with Abū 'Abdillah (a. s.) ; he called for the table-spread and we took our meals. Then he :called for the washbowl and hand-towel. I said to him

May I be your ransom! The words of Allah: And He taught Adam the names, all of' them - was (this) wash-bowl and hand-towel among them?' He (a.s.) said: 'The mountain-passes and the valleys.' Saying this he pointed by his hand this and that ”.way

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: “Verily, Allah taught Adam the names of His proofs, all of them; then He presented them - and they were the spirits - to the angels, and said: 'Tell

Me the names of these if you are right in your claims that you have more right, than (Me) Adam, to the vicegerency in the earth because of your glorifying and extolling'.

They said:'Glory be to Thee! We have no knowledge but that which Thou hast taught us; surely Thou, Thou (alone), art the Knowing, the Wise.' Allah, Blessed and High is He! said: 'O Adam! Inform them of their names.' When he informed them of their names, they knew of their (i.e. those spirits) high rank before Allah, Great is His name!

They realized that they (i.e. those spirits) were more deserving to be the vicegerents of Allah in His earth, and (to be) His proofs over His creatures. Then Allah removed them (the spirits) from their sight, and subjugated them with their (i.e. those spirits) obedience and love; and told them,

'Did I not say to you that I surely know the unseen (secrets) of the heavens and the earth and (that) I know what you manifest and what you were hiding?'"(۱)

The author says: The meaning of this tradition may be understood from the commentary given earlier; and it may also be realized that there was no contradiction between this tradition and the preceding ones.

It was explained earlier that the verse ۱۵:۲۱ (And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it . . .) that every thing originally exists in the treasures of the unseen; the things that are with us came into being on descending

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۱- Ma'ani 'l-akhbar

from there. The name given to a thing in this existence is in fact the name of that .which is hidden in the treasures of the unseen

You may say that Allah taught Adam every thing that was in His treasures of the unseen – unseen that was hidden from the heavens and the earth. The same idea may be conveyed in these words: Allah taught Adam the names of all things – the things that were unseen secrets hidden from the heavens and the earth. The sum .total of both statements is the same

the substance, of = الطّينه) It is not out of place here to point to the Tradition of at-tīnah :which a thing is made). Such a tradition, narrated in Biharu '۱-anwar, is as follows

Jabir ibn 'Abdillah said: "I said to the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.a.): 'What was the first thing which Allah created?' He said 'The light of your prophet, O Jabir! Allah created it, then created from it every good; then He caused it to stand before Him in the station of ."nearness", so long as Allah wished

Then He divided it into parts; and He created the Throne from one part, and the Chair from another part, and the bearers of the Throne and the occupiers of the Chair from yet another part; and He placed the fourth part in the station of love, as long as Allah .wished

Then He divided it into parts; and He created the Pen from one part, and the Tablet from

another part, and the Garden from yet another part; and He placed the fourth part in .the station of fear, as long as Allah wished

Then He divided it into portions, and He created the angels from one portion, and the sun from another portion, and the moon from yet another portion, and He placed the .fourth portion in the station of hope, as long as Allah wished

Then He divided it into portions, and He created the understanding from one portion, and the knowledge and forbearance from another portion, and the (divine) protection and help from yet other portion, and He placed the fourth portion in the station of .modesty as long as Allah wished

Then He looked at it with awe-inspiring eye, and that Light started perspiring, and one hundred and twenty-four thousand drops dropped from it; and Allah created from each drop the soul of a prophet and apostle. Then the souls of the prophets began breathing, and Allah created from their breasts the souls of (His) friends and the ".martyrs and the good ones '

The author says: There are numerous Tradition of the same type; and on deep pondering they support what we have written earlier; some of them will be discussed later on. You should not reject such Tradition outright, thinking that they were forged .by the Sūfīs

The wonders of the creation are unfathomable; the scientists and the philosophers have spent, and are spending, their lives in discovering some of its secrets; but every solved enigma brings in

.its wake a lot of fresh previously unthought of enigmas

Do not forget that this is the unfathomability of this physical world – the smallest in range, the narrowest in scope, the lowest in rank. How can we pass judgement about ?other worlds beyond this one – the worlds of light, spaciousness and abundance

Suratul Baqarah: Verse ۳۴

point

(۳۴) وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلائِكَهِ اسْجُدُواْ لآدَمَ فَسَجَدُواْ إِلاَّ إِبْلِيسَ أَبَى وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ

And when We said to the angels: "Prostrate before Adam", then all prostrated except .(Iblīs. He refused and he showed arrogance and he was one of the unbelievers (۳۴

General Comment

It has been explained earlier that the preceding words, "and what you were hiding", show that there was a hidden thing that had, meanwhile, come into open. The last sentence of this verse too leads to the same conclusion. Instead of saying, "He refused and he showed arrogance, and he disbelieved", it says, ". . . he was one of the ."unbelievers

It was not that he became an unbeliever at that moment; he was an unbeliever long since, but had kept it a secret, and this event brought it into open. Also, it was mentioned that the event of the prostration of the angels must have happened between the divine words, "Surely I know what you do not know", and the words, ". . . I know what you manifest and what you were hiding". It may be asked: Why then has ?Allah put this verse after those words

Probably it has been done just to

create a link between the stories of creation of Adam and his being placed in the Paradise. The twelve verses (٢٨-٣٩) were revealed to describe how and when man was made vicegerent of Allah, how was he sent down to the earth, and what is to happen to him in this life - the happenings that will have a bearing on his lasting .happiness or unhappiness

For this theme, the event of prostration has not much importance - except as a connecting link. That is why it has been mentioned here only briefly without going into details. Perhaps, it is because of the same reason that the Qur'an has changed the pronouns referring to Allah from the third person (your Lord said) to the first (And .(when We said

The angels had not hidden anything from Allah; it was Iblīs who had done so. Then why did Allah ascribe this deed to all of them (you were hiding)? Allah in this talk used the same method which even the human beings have adopted for their own speeches; we ascribe the work of an individual to the whole group, if the doer is not .properly identified or if he tries to remain anonymous

Also, there may be another explanation for it. Apparently the first announcement, "I am going to make in the earth a vicegerent", had shown that the said vicegerent would have authority over the angels too. It may be inferred from the command .obliging them to prostrate before Adam

Probably on hearing that

first announcement some disturbing thought had come into their minds, as it had never occurred to them that any earthly creature could be given authority over everything including themselves. Some Tradition too point to it. In this context the .words, “what you were hiding”, could easily be addressed to the angels

Commentary

Qur’an: “Prostrate before Adam”: Apparently it shows that prostration, per se, may be done before other than Allah, if it is done in conformity with Allah's command, as a :(.mark of respect to that person. A similar case is found in the story of Yūsuf (a.s

And he raised his parents upon the throne and they (all) fell down in prostration before him, and he said: “O my father! this is the interpretation of my vision of old; my .(Lord has indeed made it to be true” (١٢:١٠٠

.This topic needs some clarification

It was explained in the chapter of The Opening what the worship means. The worshipper places himself in the position of servitude and performs what manifests .this status, what clearly shows that he accepts the mastership of his master

Those acts must be such as to show the master's mastership or the servant's servitude; for example, prostrating before the master, bowing down to him, standing .before him when he sits, walking behind him when he walks etc

The more apt an action is to show this status, the more reserved it becomes to the rites of the divine worship. Prostration is the most significant symbol of the master's status arid the servant's

low rank, because the man in this act falls down and puts his forehead on the ground. .For this reason, it has the strongest connection with the divine worship

However, prostration is not the same thing as worship. They have two different meanings, and worship is not a quidditative substance of prostration. A quidditative characteristic can never be separated from any being. But prostration may be done without any thought of reverence or worship – for example, just to make fun of .someone

Keeping this in view, it may safely be said that although the connection of prostration with divine worship is the strongest, that worship is not its quiddity. Therefore, prostration, per se, cannot be exclusively reserved for Allah. If there is any .impediment or obstruction, it should emanate from the sharī'ah or the reason

What the sharī'ah and the reason forbid is ascribing the prerogatives of the lordship to anyone other than Allah. But they do not forbid honouring someone or according .him respect when it is done without elevating him to godhead

The discourse given above was from purely academic point of view. But the religious good taste, conditioned as it is by rituals of worship, has strictly reserved the prostration for divine worship; it should not be done for anyone other than Allah; in .Islam, one is forbidden to prostrate before others even as a mark of respect

Apart from prostration, there is no proof – either from the Qur'an and tradition or from reason and logic – against according respect

and showing reverence to others than Allah, especially when it is done as a part of the love of Allah; examples may be given of revering and loving the good servants of Allah and paying respects to the graves of the friends of Allah or to the things attributed to .them

There is no reason whatsoever why such actions should be prohibited. (We shall deal (.with this subject in a more appropriate place, God willing

Tradition

Abū 'Abdillah (a.s.) said: "When Allah created Adam and ordered the angels to prostrate before him, it came into the angels' mind: 'We never thought that Allah had created any creature more honourable than us; we are His neighbours, and we are '.the nearest of His creation to Him

Thereupon Allah said: 'Did I not say to you that I know what you manifest and what you were hiding?'- (it was) a reference to what they had mentioned concerning the affairs of the jinn, and had concealed what was in their own minds. So, the angels, (who had said what they had said, took refuge with the Throne." (at-Tafsīr, al-'Ayyashī

Another tradition of the same theme is narrated in the same book from 'Alī ibn al-Husayn (a.s.), the last part of which runs as follows: "When the angels realized that they had fallen into error, they took refuge with the Throne; and it was a group of the angels - and they were those who were around the Throne; it was not all the angels .((who had thought so

".So, they have taken refuge with the Throne till the Day of Resurrection . .

The author says: The theme of the two Tradition may be inferred from the talk of the angels: "We celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness"; and "Glory be to Thee! We have no knowledge but that which Thou hast taught us; surely Thou, Thou (alone), art ".the Knowing, the Wise

It will be explained later that the Throne means the divine knowledge, as the Tradition narrated from the Imams of Ahlu 'l-bayt (a.s.) say. (Therefore, the angels' taking refuge with the Throne would refer to their confession that they knew only that which (.Allah had taught them and that only Allah was the Knowing, the Wise

According to some Tradition, the word "the unbelievers", (in the clause, "and he was one of the unbelievers") refers to the species, jinn, to which Iblīs belonged, and which :was created before man. Allah says

And certainly We created man of clay that gives forth sound, of black mud fashioned .(into shape. And the jinn We created before of intensely hot fire (۱۵:۲۶-۲۷

According to the above-mentioned Tradition, the attribution of hiding to the angels (what you were hiding) needs no explanation; the clause means exactly what it says; .the angels had actually hidden in their hearts the idea of their supremacy

A third, group of Tradition says that the said clause refers to Iblīs and his hidden thought that he would not make obeisance to Adam and would not prostrate before him if

.asked to do so

There is no contradiction between these various explanations, because all the meanings may be inferred from the Qur'anic verses. They are all true and based on .fact. Various Tradition throw light on various facets of the same fact

Abū Basīr said: "I said to Abū 'Abdillah (a. s.): 'Did the angels prostrate and put their foreheads on the earth?' He said: 'Yes, as an honour (bestowed on him) by Allah.' ("(Qisasu 'l-anbiya, ar-Rawandī

The Imam said: "Verily the prostration of the angels before Adam was in obedience to (Allah and for their love of Adam." (Tuhafu '۱-'uqūl

Mūsa ibn Ja'far (peace be on them both) narrates through his forefathers that a Jew asked Amīru 'l-mu'minīn 'Alī (a.s.) about the miracles of the Prophet in comparison with the miracles of (other) prophets (in course of which) he said: "This is Adam before whom Allah ordered His angels to prostrate." "Did He do any thing like it for "?Muhammad

Alī (a. s.) said: "It was so. But Allah ordered His angels to prostrate before Adam; yet' their prostration was not a prostration of worship; (it was not) that they had worshipped Adam against Allah, Mighty and Great is He! It was rather as an .acknowledgement of Adam's superiority and a mercy of Allah towards him

And Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was given what was better than that. Verily Allah, Great and High is He!, blessed him in His omnipotence, and the angels, all of them, prayed for him, and the believers were obliged to pray for

(him. So this is the increase, O Jew! "(al-Ihtijaj

Allah created Adam, and he remained for forty years in (that) shape (i.e. a statue without life). And Iblīs, the cursed, used to pass by him and say: "Why have you been created?" al -'Alīm (i.e. al-Kazim - a.s.) said: "Then Iblīs said: 'If Allah ordered me to .prostrate before this, I would certainly disobey Him

Then Allah said to the angels, 'Prostrate before Adam'; all of them prostrated; but . . .' Iblīs showed the envy that was in his heart and he refused to prostrate." (at-Tafsīr, al-(Qummī

Biharu 'l-anwar narrates, quoting from Qisasu 'l-anbiya', as-Sadiq (a.s.) that he said: "Iblīs was ordered to prostrate before Adam, and he said: 'O my Lord! By Thy honour! If Thou excusest me from prostrating before Adam, I would certainly worship Thee worship no one would ever have worshipped Thee in a like manner.' Allah, Great is His " '.glory!, said: 'I like to be worshipped according to My own pleasure

The Imam also said: "Verily Iblīs cried aloud four times: First, on the day he was cursed, and the day he was dropped down to the earth, and the day Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was sent (as prophet) after a (long) interval of the apostles, and when the source of the Book was sent down. And he snorted (in satisfaction) twice: when Adam ".ate from the tree and when he (Adam) was sent down from the Garden

:And he said about the words of Allah

so their nakedness appeared

:(unto them (۲۰:۱۲۱

".Their nakedness was not seen before, then it was uncovered"

".Also he said: "The tree from which Adam was forbidden (to eat) was the spikenard

The author says: The Tradition - and there are many - support what we have written about prostration.

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۳۵-۳۹

point

(۳۵) وَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلاَ مِنْهَا رَغَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلاَ تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الْظَّالِمِينَ

(۳۶) فَأَزَلَّهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ وَقُلْنَا اهْبِطُواْ بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَى حِينٍ

(۳۷) فَتَلَقَّى آدَمُ مِن رَّبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

(۳۸) قُلْنَا اهْبِطُواْ مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُم مِّنِّي هُدًى فَمَن تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلاَ خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

(۳۹) وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ وَكَذَّبُواْ بِآيَاتِنَا أُوْلَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

And We said: "O Adam! dwell you and your wife in the Garden and eat (you both) from it (freely) a plenteous (food) wherever you (two) wish and do not approach (you two) .(this tree, for then you (two) will be of the unjust" (۳۵

But the Satan made them both slip from it and drove them out of what they were in; and We said: "Get down, some of you being the enemies of others; and there is for .(you in the earth an abode and a provision for a time" (۳۶

Then Adam received (some) words from his Lord, so He returned to him mercifully; . (surely He is Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful (۳۷

We said: "Get down you there-from all together; and if there comes to you a guidance

from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall .(they grieve (۳۸

And (as to) those who disbelieve in, and belie, Our signs, they are the inmates of the .(fire, in it they shall abide” (۳۹

Commentary

Qur’an: And We said: “O Adam! Dwell you and your wife. . . ”:Although the story of the angels' prostration before Adam has been repeated several times in the Qur'an, that :of his placement in the Garden has been given in three places only

.(First: The verses given above, from Chapter ۲ (the Cow

:(Second: In Chapter ۷ (the Elevated Places

- And (We said): “O Adam! dwell you and your wife in the Garden; so eat from where .(you desire, but do not go near this tree, for then you will be of the unjust” (۱۹
- But the Satan whispered an evil suggestion to them that he might make manifest to them what was hidden from them of their nakedness, and he said: “Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree except that you may not both become two angels or that .(you may(not) become of the immortals” (۲۰
- .(And he swore to them both: “Most surely I am a sincere adviser to you” (۲۱
- Then he caused them to fall by deceit; so when they tasted of the tree, their nakedness became manifest to them, and they both began to cover themselves with the leaves of the Garden; and their Lord called out to them: “Did I not forbid

.(you both from that tree and say to you that the Satan is your open enemy?" (۲۲

- They said: "Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers" (۲۳).

- He said: "Get down, some of you being the enemies of others, and there is for you in the earth an abode and a provision for a time" (۲۴).

- He (also) said: "Therein shall you live, and therein shall you die, and from it shall you be raised" (۲۵).

:(Third: In Chapter ۲۰ (Ta-Ha

- And certainly We had covenanted unto Adam before, but he forgot; and We did not find in him any determination (۱۱۵).

- And when We said to the angels: "Prostrate before Adam", they did prostrate, but Iblīs (did it not); he refused (۱۱۶).

- So We said: "O Adam! surely this is an enemy to you and to your wife; therefore let him not drive you both forth from the Garden so that you should be put to toil (۱۱۷);

- Surely it is (ordained) for you that you shall not be hungry therein nor bare of clothing (۱۱۸);

- and that you shall not be thirsty therein nor shall you feel the heat of the sun" (۱۱۹).

- But the Satan whispered an evil suggestion to him; he said: "O Adam! shall I guide you to the tree of immortality and a kingdom which decays not?" (۱۲۰).

- Then they both ate of it, so

their nakedness appeared unto them, and they both began to cover themselves with .(leaves of the Garden, and Adam disobeyed his Lord, so he got astray(۱۲۱

• ۱۲۲) (him) Then his Lord chose him, so He turned to him and guided).

He said: "Get down you two therefrom, all (of you), one of you(is) enemy to another. • So if there comes to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, he .(shall not go astray nor be unhappy (۱۲۳

And whoever turns away from My remembrance, his shall surely be a straitened life, • .(and We will raise him, on the Day of Resurrection, blind" (۱۲۴

He shall say: "My Lord! why hast Thou raised me blind, and I was a seeing one • (indeed?" (۱۲۵

He will say: "Even so: Our signs came to you, but you forgot them; even thus shall • .(you be forsaken this day" (۱۲۶

And thus do We recompense him who is extravagant and does not believe in the • signs of his Lord; and certainly the chastisement of the hereafter is severer and more .(lasting" (۱۲۷

The context, and particularly the opening words of the story, "Verily I am going to make in the earth a vicegerent", clearly show that it was for the earth that Adam was created; it was the original plan that he should live and die in the earth. Allah had temporarily placed the couple in the Garden to test them in order that their .nakedness might be uncovered to them

Also the context in

all three places shows that the order to the angels to prostrate before Adam, and then to Adam to stay in the Garden is a single, continuous, story. It all shows that Adam (a. s.) was created specifically for the earth, and the way to send him down was :through the Garden as mentioned in the Qur'an

It was shown that he was superior to the angels and, therefore, more qualified for the vicegerency of Allah; then they were told to prostrate before him, in acknowledgement of his superiority; then he was placed in the Garden but forbidden to go near a particular tree; so that on eating from it they should become aware of .their nakedness and then be sent down to the earth

It means that the last link in this chain was their becoming aware of their private parts – it was this factor which irrevocably showed that they were fit for this earth, ready literally means shame, disgrace, private part of the (السَّوأه) ,"for this life. "as-Saw 'ah .body

In this story it has been used in the last meaning, as may be seen from the words, “and they both began to cover themselves with leaves of the Garden”. That is why we (."have translated it as “nakedness

However, their awareness of their pudenda proved that in addition to their spiritual qualities, they had also animal instincts and desires ingrained in them. It naturally made them dependent on nutrition and growth. Iblīs wanted them to become aware of their

.nakedness

Adam and his wife were given earthly, human existence and were at once placed in the Garden without any delay; they were not given time to perceive and understand their nakedness or its concomitants; they had not yet comprehended the life of this .earth and its necessities

When they were sent to the Garden their connection with the spiritual world, including the angels, was strong; their link with it was not weakened. It should be noted that Allah has said, "what was hidden from them"; He has not said, "what had been hidden from them"; it may be inferred from the expression used that their nakedness could not remain hidden for ever in this life; it was hidden for only a short period when they .were placed in the Garden

The uncovering of their nakedness with all its concomitants was a predetermined fact and it depended upon their eating from that tree. That is why Allah had told them: "therefore let him not drive you both forth from the Garden so that you should be put ."to toil"; thereafter, the Satan "drove them out of what they were in

It should not be overlooked that even when Allah pardoned them after their repentance, He did not return them to the Garden – they were sent down to the earth to live therein. If their eating of the tree, the uncovering of their private parts and the life of this world were not a confirmed divine plan, an irrevocable predetermined decree, they would have

been returned to their place in the Garden as soon as they were forgiven their .mistake

In short, it was the divine plan that they should spend sometime in the Garden to get them prepared for the life in this world; and their removal from the Garden, according to the causal relation decreed by Allah, depended on their eating from the tree and becoming aware of their nakedness, and it happened because they listened to the .whispering of the Satan

Allah says: "And certainly We had covenanted unto Adam before, but he forgot". Which covenant does this verse allude to? Does it refer to the admonition, "and do not ?"approach (you two) this tree, for then you (two) will be of the unjust

Or to the warning, "surely this (i.e., the Satan) is an enemy to you and to your wife"? Or does it refer to the general covenant made with all human beings in general and with ?the prophets in particular

The first possibility is out of question altogether. Allah says: "But the Satan whispered an evil suggestion to them . . . and he said: 'Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree except that you may not become two angels or that you may (not) become of the " '. . . immortals

Obviously, when Adam and his wife committed the error and tasted of the tree they were aware of the prohibition – even the evil suggestion of the Satan had begun with a reference to it. And Allah says

in this verse that “We had covenanted unto Adam before, but he forgot; and We did not find in him any determination.” It, therefore, could not refer to that prohibition, .because Adam had not forgotten it at all

The second suggestion – that the covenant might refer to the warning against the Satan – is not so wide of mark; still it is not supported by apparent meaning of the verses. The said warning was given to both Adam and his wife, while this verse refers .to a covenant made especially with Adam

It leaves us with the last alternative that the covenant means the general covenant which was made with the whole mankind and more particularly with the prophets. This verse (about the covenant with Adam and his forgetting it) occurs at the beginning of the story in the chapter of Ta-Ha; and the story concludes with the words, “So if there comes to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My .guidance, he shall not go astray nor be unhappy

And whoever turns away from My remembrance, his shall surely be a straitened life, and We will raise him, on the Day of Resurrection, blind. He shall say: 'My Lord! why hast Thou raised me blind, and I was a seeing one indeed?' He will say: 'Even so: Our signs came to you, but you forgot them; even thus shall you be forsaken (literally: '”.forgotten) today

These concluding verses perfectly fit that opening one. To turn away from the remembrance of Allah

is not different from forgetting the covenant of Allah. Add to it the use of the same verb (you forgot them) in the next verse. All these references are perfectly compatible with the covenant made with the souls of the human beings about the Mastership of .Allah and their own servitude

That covenant obliged the man that he should never forget that Allah is his Lord, the Ruler and Master of his affairs; nor should he lose sight of the fact that he is a wholly owned slave of Allah; that he has no authority whatsoever over his benefit or harm; nor does he has any control over his life, death or resurrection; in short he owns .neither his person, his characteristics nor his actions

The error that stands opposite to this remembrance is forgetfulness - man forgets his Lord and His All-encompassing Mastership; he becomes engrossed in his own self, .getting bogged down more and more in the mire of this world's attractions

Look at this world's life, with all its diversity; and see how it spreads its tentacles in all directions. Note how it is shared by the believer and the unbeliever both. And then find out how the two groups respond to its joy and sorrow. How different is their respective attitude towards this life's success and failure, happiness and .unhappiness, content and discontent, relief and suffering

These factors affect the two groups - the believers and the unbelievers - in entirely different ways. The believer has the knowledge of Allah

and the unbeliever lacks this knowledge. And it causes all the differences in their .respective behaviour

Every man looks at this world; a world that is submerged in all types of misfortunes and disasters: a life followed by death, a health ruined by disease, a prosperity eaten away by poverty, a comfort destroyed by discomfort, a gain nullified by loss – this is, in .a nutshell, the life of this world

The believer knows that everything and every affair belongs to Allah; nothing is independent of God, the Lord. Every thing and every affair emanates from Him; and all that originates from Him is good and beautiful; nothing but beauty and splendour, .goodness and excellence, can come from Him

And because all things and all affairs issue forth from his Lord and Master, he thinks that all is elegant and fine; he dislikes nothing and fears nothing; everything in his eyes is likeable, except that which his Master tells him to dislike. He subjugates his likes and dislikes to those of his Master. In short, all his attention is fixed to the .pleasure of his Master

He knows that everything is the sole property of God; none else has any share in anything. That being the case, why should he worry how the Master manages His own .property? He does not think that he is competent to meddle in the affairs of his Lord

This submission to Allah creates a perfect tranquillity, a truly happy life, untarnished by unhappiness; a light without darkness, a joy

without sorrow, a benefit without harm, and a riches without want. It all happens .because he believes in Allah and in His mastership

On the other hand is the unbeliever who does not know Allah. By cutting himself off from the one and only Master, he has to bow his head before every creature. He believes that everything is independent in its actions – that it has a power of its own to .benefit or to harm, to do good or evil

Consequently, he remains in constant fear of everything; he is ever apprehensive of every real or imagined danger. He is always grieving for want has befallen him, longing for the opportunities he has missed. He feels nostalgia for the prestige or wealth that is gone; breaks his heart for the children, relatives or friends who have .left him

He is inextricably trapped by the attractions of the world; he relies on them and has trust in them; and when any thing goes wrong, he sinks into despair. Then as soon as he makes a virtue of necessity and is resigned to that misfortunate, a new calamity .overwhelms him

In this way, he is always driven from pillar to post, with a heavy heart and a gloomy .”countenance; “thus does Allah lay uncleanliness on those who do not believe

It can be seen, in the light of the above discourse, that forgetting the covenant and unhappiness of this world's life, both are interrelated – the later springs from the former. This fact becomes clearer

if we compare the wordings of the verse ۲۰:۱۲۳-۱۲۴ with those used in the verse under :discussion. The former says

So if there comes to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, he shall not go astray nor be unhappy. And whoever turns away from My remembrance, his shall surely be a straitened life, and We will raise him, on the Day of Resurrection, .blind

:And the same idea has been expressed in this verse in the following words

then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they . . . .grieve

It may be inferred from these verses that the forbidden tree was of such a nature that if one ate from it he would certainly be entangled in the troubles and misfortunes of this life - he would spend his life in this world, heedless of his own place, forgetting .his Lord

Probably Adam (a. s.) wanted to combine the fruit of that tree with the covenant that he had entered into with his Lord. But he could not succeed; the fruit had its effect, he forgot the covenant and fell into the troubles and toils of this world. Then he was .saved when he repented before Allah and Allah turned to him with mercy

literally (الرَّغَد) "Qur'an: and eat (you two) from it (freely) a plenteous (food) "ar-Raghad means happiness, well-being, good life and affluence arghada 'l -qawmu means, "the people left their cattle to graze wherever (أرغَدَ القومُ مواشيهم) mawashiyahum "it liked. "Qawmun raghad

means people (or women) having a life of plenty (نِساءٌ رَغَدٌ) ”and “nisa'un raghad (قومٌ رَغَد) .and opulence

Qur’an: and do not approach (you two) this tree; The context shows that actual prohibition was of eating from it; but they were told not even to approach it; the prohibition was couched in these terms for emphasis. What was really forbidden is :seen from the verse

,(so when they tasted of the tree, their nakedness became manifest to them (٧:٢٢

and

. (they both ate of it, so their nakedness appeared unto them (٢٠:١٢١ . . .

is the nomen (الظالمين) ”Qur’an: for then you (two) will be of the unjust: “az-Zalimīn injustice, to do wrong). It is not from az-zulmah (darkness), = الظُّلم) agentis of az-zulm as has been suggested by someone. Adam and his wife acknowledged their wrong-:doing, and the Qur'an quotes them as saying

Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have“ .((not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers” (٧:٢٣

This clause has been changed in Chapter ٢٠ to “so that you should be put to toil”; and :the toil has further been explained in these words

Surely it is (ordained) for you that you shall not be hungry therein (i.e. in the Garden) nor bare of clothing; and that you shall not be thirsty therein nor shall you feel the .(heat of the sun (٢٠:١١٨-١١٩

Clearly, the injustice and wrong-doing, mentioned in the verse ٢:٢٥, was to bring in its wake the toil of

this world – hunger, thirst, nakedness and other discomforts. The injustice or wrong that they had done was against their own selves; it was neither a sin (as this term is used in the sharī'ah) nor an injustice against Allah.

It shows that the prohibition was in the nature of an advice pointing out to them what was good for their own comfort; it did not have the force of an ordained law. Adam and his wife did wrong to themselves, because their disregard to that divine advice caused their removal from the Garden.

When a man commits a sin (i.e. an offence, from the sharī'ah point of view), he is given a punishment. Then if he repents and his repentance is accepted, the punishment is completely waived off, and he is returned to his previous position as though he had not committed the sin at all.

If Adam and his wife were guilty of such a sin, they should have been returned to their place in the Garden soon after their repentance was accepted. But it was not done. It clearly shows that the prohibition did not have the force of an ordained law; it was only an advice.

Even so, neglecting it had its natural effect on both of them and they had to come out of the Garden. But this removal from the Garden was not a punishment for any sin or crime; it was the natural consequence of the wrong they had done against their own selves. (We shall write

(.again on this subject, God willing

Qur'an: But the Satan made them both slip from it: The Satan could have misled them by creating evil thoughts in their hearts, in the same way as he misleads other human beings. But many verses, in the three narratives quoted at the beginning of this commentary, show that the Satan had appeared before Adam and his wife, and had :talked to them face to face

.(So We said: "O Adam! surely this is an enemy to you and to your wife" (٢٠:١١٧

Allah had pointed out the Satan to Adam, not by any verbal description but by showing (."to him the person of the said enemy. (Note the demonstrative pronoun, "this is

.(The Satan) said: "O Adam! Shall I guide you to the tree of immortality. . . " (٢٠:١٢٠)

.The speaker, that is, the Satan, must have talked to Adam face to face

And he (i.e. the Satan) swore to them both: "Most surely I am a sincere adviser to you" .((٧:٢١)

. Obviously, he was visible to Adam and his wife and swore during his talk with them

And their Lord called out to them: "Did I not forbid you both from that tree and say . . . (to you that the Satan is your open enemy?" (٧:٢٢

It indicates that the Satan was visible to Adam and his wife. If the Satan had misled them by creating evil thoughts into their minds without appearing before them, they could have said to Allah that they were not aware that

that thought was put into their minds by the Satan; that they mistook it to be their .own thought because the Satan had not appeared before them

They used to see and recognize the Satan. Likewise, other prophets – all of them covered by Allah's protection – used to see and recognize him if and when he came to them. Many Tradition mention such encounters in the stories of Nūh, Ibrahīm, Mūsa, 'Īsa, Yahya, Ayyūb, Isma'īl and Muhammad (may Allah bless him and his progeny as .(well as the prophets

:The above-quoted verses as well as the verse ٧:٢٠

". . . and he said: "Your Lord has not forbidden from this tree except that

also show that the Satan had visited then near that tree in the Garden. He entered the Garden, talked to them and put evil suggestion before them. He was able to do so .because the Garden was not the Garden of eternal abode

The Qur'an also says that Adam, his wife and the Satan all were removed from the :Garden together. (Of course, Allah had said to the Satan

.(Then get down from this, for it does not befit you to behave proudly therein" (٧:١٣"

But the pronouns "this" and "therein" may refer to the angels or to the heaven. It may mean: Get down from the company of the angels; or, get down from the heaven as it (.is a place of honour

Qur'an: and We said: "Get down, some of you being the enemies of others. . . ": The second

person pronouns, used in this verse, are plural, which denote at least three persons. Clearly, it was addressed to Adam, his wife and the Satan. The Satan was turned out .(of the heaven and/or the company of the angels before (as described above

This verse combines in itself that previous order too; and manifests the firm decree of Allah establishing enmity between Iblīs on one side and Adam and his wife and their descendants on the other. It also promulgates another decree that they shall live in .the earth, die therein, and be raised again from it

It may safely be said that the whole human race (Adam together with his :descendants) is covered by the last mentioned decree

.(Therein shall you live, and therein shall you die, and from it shall you be raised (۷:۲۵

This verse comes at the end of the story (in Chapter ۷) which begins with the following :words

And certainly We created you, then We fashioned you, then We said to the angels: .("Prostrate before Adam"... (۷:۱۱

In both verses plural pronouns have been used; and it is an indication that the creation and the decree to live and die in the earth includes more than two, that is, .other human beings too besides Adam and his wife

The story of Adam may have been used by Allah to represent the rise, fall and rise again of the wole mankind. Adam was the first representatives of humanity, and his life was a symbol, a miniature, of the human beings

.life-span in this world

The angels were told to prostrate before Adam, because he was the vicegerent of Allah in the earth. It has been mentioned earlier that this vicegerency was bestowed on the whole mankind. The angels prostrated before Adam, as he was the symbol of .humanity, the representative of his race

Adam and his wife were placed in the Garden and then were sent down from there because they had eaten of the forbidden tree. Every man may see his own face in this mirror. His soul, before coming to this world, enjoyed the sublime and lofty existence; his abode was spiritually near to his Lord - a place of joy and happiness, of splendour and light; in the company of purified companions and spiritual friends, near to Allah, .the Lord of the worlds

Then he opted for this transient life, and was at once entangled in the troubles and toils of this world; leaving that purified existence, he was attracted to this tedious and .odious life

Adam at once repented and prayed for the mercy of Allah. In the same way, man may return to Allah and consequently to the eternal abode of honour and bliss. But if he took the wrong turning, did not try to return to Allah, and, in short, followed his base desires, he would change the bounty of Allah into disbelief and ungratefulness, would !direct himself to the place of disgrace - to the hell; and how evil that resting place is

(Qur'an: Then Adam received (some

to receive) = التّلقی)"words from his Lord, so He returned to him mercifully: "at-Talaqqī signifies "to learn". It was this learning of the words that paved the way for the .repentance of Adam

literally means to return; generally it is used for repentance, (التـوبه) "at-Tawbah" because when a man repents, he returns to his Lord. This verb is at times ascribed to Allah (as in this verse), and signifies that Allah returns or restores the servant to His .grace and mercy

In other words, He accepts the plea of the servant and forgives his sins. At other times it is attributed to the servant; then it signifies the servant's return to Allah, that .is, his repentance from his sins

at-Tawbah (repentance) of man is flanked on both sides by two tawbahs (mercies) of Allah. Man can never do without the mercy of Allah. He needs mercy and help of Allah to turn away from sins; only then he may return to Allah, may repent from his sins; .then again the mercy of Allah comes forward, and his repentance is accepted

Therefore, an accepted repentance of man issues forth from the mercy of Allah, and :also ends on His mercy. The verse ۹:۱۱۸ clearly mentions this fact

.(then He returned to them (mercifully) so that they might return (i.e. might repent

What were the words which Adam received from his Lord? Some people think that it :refers to their invocation reported in Chapter ۷

They said: "Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive

.(us not, and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers”(۷:۲۳

But this view is not supported by the sequence of the events. Adam and his wife had addressed that invocation before they were told to get down from the Garden (۷:۲۴); and it was after getting that order that he “received some words” from Allah, as is clear from the verse ۲:۳۶-۳۷. Therefore, “some words” cannot refer to that previously .uttered invocation

There may, however, be another explanation: When Allah announced to the angels that He was going to make a vicegerent in the earth, they said: “Wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood, while we celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness?” Allah did not say that their accusation against the wouldbe .vicegerent was wrong; His only answer was that He taught Adam all the names

There must have been something deep, meaningful and relevant in this teaching of the names; otherwise, the angels could not be satisfied, their objection could not be answered. The names taught to Adam must have contained some such thing that would come to the rescue of man if he sinned, would save him from disgrace if he .erred

Probably, the words received at the time of repentance were related to the names .taught to him in the beginning

It cannot be denied that Adam (a.s.) did wrong to himself by placing himself in this world - a crossroads of happiness and unhappiness; had he been

ensnared by it he would have perished; but he chose to return to his original place of spiritual bliss and was saved; he had to undergo, in this process, untold miseries and .unbearable hardships

In any case, he put himself in so much trouble that he became “unjust” to himself. The question arises as to why Allah selected this hard way to send him from the Garden to the earth. The fact, however, remains that in this process he attained to such heights of eternal bliss and spiritual perfection as would have been impossible to reach .without coming down to the earth – and that too with a stigma of mistake

The events leading to his removal from the Garden and, later, to the acceptance of his repentance showed to him his true reality – how humble, dependent, deficient and servile he was; and at the same time he came to realize that every difficulty of this world leads to manifold ease in the next life; every unpleasantness here results in enhanced pleasantness there; every trouble in the obedience to Allah brings in its wake the pleasure of Allah and His unlimited reward; the process continues until the .servant reaches the sublime presence of his Lord

Adam knew, through his own experience, taste of many of the beautiful attributes of Allah: His forgiveness, turning mercifully to the servants, covering their mistakes, bestowing mercy on them, putting them in the shadow of His compassion and grace – these are some of the divine attributes

.which He has especially reserved for the sinners

Adam could not know and understand them without passing through the stages which Allah had decreed for him.

This, however, was his repentance; it made ordination of asharī'ah essential. It was necessary for Adam and his descendants to know which path they should take so as to reach their destination, the abode of bliss and happiness. His repentance brought him to the stage where promulgation of religion and ordination of the sharī'ah was inevitable.

:That is why Allah frequently mentions the repentance before the belief

Stand fast then (in the right path) as you are commanded, as also he who has turned (to Allah) with you. . . (۱۱:۱۱۲);

And most surely I am most forgiving to him who repents and believes and does good. . .(۲۰:۸۲).

.There are many such verses in the Qur'an

Qur'an: We said: "Get down you therefore all together; and if there comes to you a guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve. And (as to) those who disbelieve in, and belie, Our signs, they are the inmates of the fire, in it they shall abide."

This is the essence of religion ordained, for the first time, for Adam (a.s.) and his descendants. Allah has condensed the whole religion in these two sentences; nothing has been added, nor can be added to it upto the Day of Resurrection.

Ponder on this story and particularly the narrative of Chapter ۲۰. You will see that Allah had

issued two decrees in respect of Adam and his descendants. When he ate from the tree, it was decreed that he should get down to the earth and spend his life therein – a .life of trouble and toil

And when he repented, it was ordained that he and his descendants should be honoured with divine guidance. The first decree initiated the earthly life for him; the second, issued after his repentance, bestowed dignity and grace to that life, by .providing it with divine guidance

From then on, man's life is composed of two lives: A material, earthly life and a spiritual, heavenly one. It may be inferred from repetition of the order to "get down" in :this narrative

Get down, some of you being the enemies of others; and there is for you in the earth" .(an abode and a provision for a time" (۲:۳۶

Get down you therefrom all together; and if there comes to you guidance from Me. ." .(." (۲:۳۸

Repentance of Adam (۲:۳۷) occurred between these two orders. The sequence shows that Adam had repented before their departing from the Garden, although he had slipped from his earlier position of honour. It may also be, inferred from the change in ,the styles of the following verses: Allah said to Adam, when placing him in the Garden

;(do not go near this tree" (۷:۱۹"

,but when they ate from it

.(their Lord called out to them: "Did I not forbid you both from that tree. . . " (۷:۲۲

Note the demonstrative pronoun, "this", (for

a nearer object) in the former speech, and “that” (for a farther one) in the latter. Also contrast the verb, “said”, (showing proximity) of the former with “called out” (showing distance) of the latter. All this together supports the above-given explanation that at the time of the second order Adam was still in the Garden but not in his earlier .honoured place

Get down, some of you being the enemies of others; and there is for you in the earth“ .(an abode and a provision for a time” (۲:۳۶; ۷:۲۴

.(Therein shall you live, and therein shall you die, and from it shall you be raised” (۷:۲۵“

The verses indicate that the life on the earth was very different from that in the Garden. This life is firmly connected with the earth, full of difficulties and hardships. Man, in this life, is created from the earth, then after death is returned into it, and will, on the Day of Resurrection, be raised from it. This life is different from that of the Garden. It follows that Adam had lived a heavenly - and not earthly - life in the .Garden

This observation gives us a certainty that the Garden of Adam was in the heaven, .although it was not the Garden of eternal abode from which one is never turned out

.What is meant by “the heaven”? We shall, God willing explain it somewhere else

Now, we come to the mistake of Adam. The explanation given under various verses throws sufficient light on this subject. But

:the importance of the topic justifies its recapitulation in a systematic way

The verses obviously say that he had committed a mistake and disobeyed the divine command: ". . . for then you (two) will be of the unjust"; "and Adam disobeyed his Lord, so he got astray"; and they too acknowledged their error: "Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have (not) mercy on us, we shall ".certainly be of the losers

But on meditating on the verses, and particularly on the admonition not to eat of the tree, we come to a definite conclusion that the said prohibition was not in the nature of an authoritative command; it was rather like an advice to guide Adam to his good :and comfort. The following proof irresistibly leads us to this conclusion

First: Allah said in this, as well as in Chapter ٧, that eating of the tree would be an injustice, a wrong-doing (for then you two will be of the unjust). The same result has been described as "toil" (so that you should be put to toil); and the "toil" has been explained in the terms of worldly needs and troubles, because it was ordained "for you that you shall not be hungry therein (i.e., as long as you remained in the Garden) nor bare of clothing; and that you shall not be thirsty therein nor shall you feel the ."heat of the sun

It seems clear that it was to protect them from

these worldly troubles and toils that they were told not to go near that tree, The prohibition, therefore, was not more than an advice; certainly it was not an authoritative command. Going against an advice does not entail a sin, does not .involve rebellion against the adviser

The injustice, mentioned in this story, therefore, means their doing wrong against their own selves, putting themselves in this world's hardship and toil; but it cannot .mean the sin committed by a servant against his master

Second: When a servant repents, that is, returns to Allah, his Lord, and the Lord accepts that repentance, all the effects of the sin are erased, as though he had not .committed any sin at all

If the prohibition against eating from the tree had the force of an authoritative command, an ordained law, Adam and his wife should have been returned to their .place in the Garden as soon as their repentance was accepted. But they were not

It decisively proves that the prohibition was of advisory nature like telling someone not to put his hand in a fire; if he does not listen to the advice, his hand would certainly burn, and the subsequent apology would not unburn it, even if the apology was .accepted

Likewise, Adam and his wife disregarded the advice, and as a result of eating from the tree, had to go out of the Garden and live in the earth a life of trial and hardship. Their repentance could not take them back to the Garden

.as their coming to the earth was the natural and inevitable result of that action

The prohibition, in short, was no a law ordained by the Master – like the announcement that a man who neglects to pray would enter the Fire; or the one who disobeys the rules of the sharī'ah would be punished. If it were like such a command, the repentance would have rubbed out the effect of disobedience and they would have been sent back to the Garden straight away.

Third: We said: "Get down you therefrom all together; and if there comes to you a guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve. And (as to) those who disbelieve in, and belie, Our signs, they are the inmates of the fire, in it they shall abide."

These verses have put in a nutshell all the detailed laws, rules, and regulations sent by Allah for the mankind, through His angels, books and apostles. And it was the first sharī'ah which Allah ordained for the world, the world of Adam and his descendants. It was ordained after the second order to "get down" – and the order to "get down" was not a legislative, but a creative, command, resulting from his eating of the tree.

It means that at the time when Adam partook of the tree, nosharī'ah was ordained yet, and no law was promulgated. Therefore, whatever Adam did was not a transgression against any law of theshari'ah, nor was

.there any sin or crime involved in acting against that advice

Question: The order to the angels and Iblīs to prostrate before Adam was an authoritative command, and it was given before the order to Adam not to go near that .tree. Therefore, it is difficult to believe that at that time there was no obligatory law

Reply: We are talking about Adam and his descendants, and not about the angels and Iblīs. It is irrelevant whether the angels and Iblīs were given a compulsory order .before Adam was placed in the Garden

Question: If the prohibition were of an advisory nature, Allah would not have ."described its disregard in the terms of "injustice", "disobedience", and "going astray

Reply: We have already explained that the "injustice" done by Adam and his wife was .against their own selves; it was not a sin against Allah

disobedience) literally means to resist, or to yield with difficulty. = (العِصيان "al-'Isyan" but it resisted, (= فعَـصى) The Arabs say: I broke it and it was broken; I broke it fa-'asa .or yielded to my pressure with difficulty

Not heeding an order is called al-'isyan, because one does not yield to that enjoinment or prohibition. This resistance may occur against an advice as much as against a compulsory order. The word in itself does not imply sinning; it all depends on .the nature of the order that was disregarded

Of course, nowadays we, the Muslims, use this word as synonymous to sinning. And now it has become a terminology of

thesharī'ah (or of the Muslims), used for disobedience to an authoritative command. But this later transformance cannot effect its original or literal meaning for which it .was used in the Qur'an

to go astray) literally means inability of a man to look after his = الغَوايَه) "al-Ghawayah" interests; not managing one's affairs properly. This word by itself does not indicate committing a sin or crime. It is the context that determines its value. Its emphasis changes depending on whether the neglected order was an advice or an authoritative .command

Question: Then why did they repent? Why did they say, "and if Thou forgive us not, "?and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers

Reply: at-Tawbah (repentance) means to turn to. And the word can be used in various .meanings, depending on context

A servant rebels against his master, and thereafter returns to him and asks for his forgiveness; the master, if he so wishes, pardons him, and gives him his previous rank .and position

A doctor tells a patient not to eat certain fruits, lest his illness be prolonged or the disease be complicated. The patient disregards the prohibition and, as a result, puts his life in danger. Now he feels embarrassed and repents before the doctor, asking for his forgiveness, begging him to prescribe for him a medicine to enable him to regain .his health and vigour

The doctor may tell him that now it will be necessary for him to undergo a long and difficult treatment, adding that if

he persevered in the prescribed regimen his health would be much better than .before

The significance of the other words used in the narrative, like forgiveness, mercy and .loss, may likewise change with the context

Tradition

Al-Qummī ('Alī) narrates, in his at-Tafsīr, from his father (Ibrahīm ibn Hashim) who narrates, from as-Sadiq (a.s.) (omitting the chain of intervening narrators, although it was fully described by his Shaykh). He said: "as-Sadiq (a. s.) was asked about the .Garden of Adam whether it was a garden of this world or one of the hereafter's

He (a.s.) said: 'It was a garden of this world, wherein the sun and the moon rose. Had it been a Garden of the hereafter, he would have not come out of it.' He (a.s.) further said: 'Allah placed him in the Garden and allowed him its freedom with exception of .the tree

It was done) because here was a creature of Allah who could not survive without) (some) enjoinment and prohibition, nor (could it continue) without food, cloth, shelter and marriage; nor could he know, without divine help, what was beneficial to him .from what was harmful

Then came to him Iblīs and told him: "If you (two) ate from this tree, which Allah has forbidden you, you (two) would become two angels and would abide in the Garden for ever; and if you (two) did not eat from it, Allah would turn you out from the Garden;" and he swore to them that he was a sincere adviser to them; as Allah

:quotes his words

Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree except that you may not both become two angels or that you may (not)become of the immortals. And he swore to them ".both: "Most surely I am a sincere adviser to you

Adam believed in his words, and they (i.e. Adam and his wife) ate from the tree; and they became as Allah says: their nakedness became manifest to them; what Allah had clothed them with of the (attires of the) Garden dropped away from them, and they both began to cover themselves with the leaves of the Garden; and their Lord called :out to them

Did I not forbid you both from that tree and say to you that the Satan is your open ?enemy

:They said, as Allah quotes them

Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves; and if Thou forgive us not, and have" ".(not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers

:Thereupon Allah said to them

Get down, some of you being the enemies of others; and there is for you in the earth" ".an abode and a provision for a time

He (the Imam) said: "that (time) is the Day of Resurrection". He further said: "Then"' Adam descended on the (hill of) as-Safa - and it got this name because Safīyu 'llah the sincere friend of Allah, i.e. Adam) came down on it; and Hawwa' (Eve) = صَـفیُّ الله) descended on the (hill of) al-Marwah - and it was named al-Mar-wah because al-the woman descended (المرءه) mar'ah

.on it. The Adam remained in prostration for forty days, weeping for the Garden

So Jibrīl (Gabriel) came to him and said: 'Did Allah not create you with His hand, and (did He not) breath into you from His spirit, and (did He not) made His angels prostrate before you?' He said: 'Certainly.' (Then Jibrīl said:) 'and He ordered you not to eat from the tree and you disobeyed Him?' Adam said: 'Iblīs swore to me falsely.'"

The author says: There are other Tradition too from Ahlu 'l-bayt (a. s.) to the effect that the Garden of Adam was of this world; although some of them are from the same .Ibrahīm ibn Hashim

The phrase, "a garden of this world", has been used in contrast to the Garden of everlasting abode. It indicates a state between this world and the hereafter. Adam's garden was not the Garden of everlasting abode, but neither was it a garden like is between one's death and the (البَرزَخ) the state, place and time that of ours al-Barzakh .Day of Resurrection

The said Garden may be called a Garden of al-Barzakh, and it may well have been situated in this world. The sentences, "Adam descended on the (hill of) as-Safa", and "Hawwa' descended on the (hill of) al-Marwah", indicate that, before it, they were .somewhere above this world

The interpretation of "a time" with the "Day of Resurrection" is also revealing. Man remains in al-Barzakh after his death, and at the same time he remains in the earth. Many Qur'anic

.verses use these expressions interchangeably

:For example

He will say: "How many years did you tarry in the earth?" They will say: "We tarried a day or part of a day", but ask those who keep account. He will say: "You did tarry but a .(little - had you but known (it)" (۲۳:۱۱۲-۱۱۴

And at the time when the Hour shall come, the guilty shall swear (that) they did not tarry but an hour; thus they used to utter lies. And those who are given knowledge and faith will say: "Certainly you tarried according to the decree of Allah till the Day of .(Resurrection, but you did not know" (۳۰:۵۵-۵۶

Apart from that, many Tradition of Ahlu 'l-bayt (a.s.) show that the Garden of Adam was in the heaven, and that he and his wife descended from the heaven. For the one who is familiar with the language of Tradition, it is not difficult to believe that the said Garden was in the heaven and that they had descended from the heaven to the earth, .even if they were created in the earth itself and live therein all along

These expressions are not any different from those which say that the Garden is in the heaven, and yet say that the grave is an orchard from the orchards of the Garden or a pit from the pits of the Fire. Many similar expressions are found in the Tradition. Any lingering doubt will be removed when we shall write about the heaven, God .willing

There is no

mention in the correct and reliable Tradition as to how Iblīs found his way to Adam and his wife, or as to what means he adopted for this purpose. Some Tradition mention the serpent and peacock as the two helpers of Iblīs in his endeavour to .mislead Adam and his wife; but they are extremely unreliable

Obviously, such Tradition were interpolated under the influence of Judaism. This story has been taken from the Jews, and to make this point clear, we are quoting it from the :Bible (King James version). The story is given in the book of Genesis

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of ground, and breathed into his nostrils" the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And the Lord God planted a garden .eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed

And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and .from thence it was parted, and became into four heads

The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is

Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth towards the east of Assyria.

And the fourth river is Euphrates. And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature that was the name thereof.

And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

And the Lord Gad caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her

.unto the man

And Adam said: This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they .were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God has made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent :said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die

For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her .husband with her; and he did eat

And the eyes of them both were opened, and

they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the .Lord God amongst the trees of the garden

And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, ?whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat

And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast .done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat

And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; -upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of the life; And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt .bruise his heel

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou

shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it, bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. .And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living

Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of :the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever

Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the ".way of the tree of life

(Genesis, ch.۲: vs. ۷ to ch.۳: vs. ۲۴)

Compare the narrative of

p: ۲۸۱

the Qur'an with that of the Bible, then ponder on various Tradition narrated in the Shi'ah or Sunnī books; you will come to know many revealing differences. But we are .not going into it because it is beyond the scope of this book

Question: How could Iblīs enter the Garden and mislead Adam therein? The question :arises because

,i) the Garden is a place of cleanliness and purity

;(wherein there shall be nothing vain nor any sin (۵۲:۲۳

ii) The garden is in the heaven, and Iblīs was already turned out therefrom when he .refused to prostrate before Adam

.(Then get out of it, for surely you are driven away (۱۵:۳۴

.(Then get down from this, for it does not befit you to behave proudly therein (۷:۱۳

Reply: (i) The Qur'an disallows vain and sinful acts in the Garden of eternal abode (in which the believers shall be placed after resurrection) and the Garden of al-Barzakh wherein they are placed after death. But it is silent about the Garden of Adam, in which he was placed together with his wife before man was sent to this world and .given any authoritative law

Rather, it may be said that it shows not only possibility of disobedience therein, but .also its occurrence. Proof: This very disobedience of Adam and his wife

Moreover, vanity and sin are relative terms; and they do not occur until man comes .into this world, and is given some authoritative laws to follow

:ii) The argument may be replied as follows)

a. It cannot be definitely said that the

clauses, “get down of it” and “get down from this” were meant to turn Iblīs out of the heaven, because “the heaven” has not been mentioned in preceding sentences. The order, therefore, could mean, 'get out of the ranks of the angels', or 'get down from the honour and dignity given to thee'.

b. May be, the order to get down or to get out meant only that he could not live or stay in the heaven with the angels. If so, then it was not a prohibition against occasionally going or ascending thereto. This interpretation is supported by the verses which describe the Satans' occasional goings upto the heaven to eavesdrop the conversations of the angels.(١)

Also, it has been narrated that before the time of 'Īsa (a.s.), the Satans were going upto the seventh heaven; when he was born they were barred from the fourth heaven and above; then after the birth of the Prophet they were barred from all the heavens.

c. There is no mention in the Book of Allah that Iblīs had entered the Garden. Therefore, the question does not arise at all. It has, of course, been narrated in the Tradition; but they are not al-mutawatir;and possibly the narrators have described the story in their own words, and not exactly as the Imam said.

Utmost that may be put as evidence that Iblīs had entered the Garden is the verse: and he (i.e. the Satan) said:

“Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree except that you may

p: ٢٨٣

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١ - For example: And We have guarded it (i.e. the heaven) against every accursed Satan, but he who steals a hearing; so there follows him a visible flame (١٥:١٧-١٨).

,(not become two angels. . . "(۷:۱۹

as he had used the pronoun, "this", ("this tree") which denotes nearness. But if it is ,taken to mean nearness in place, it would give the same meaning in Allah's command

.(do not go near this tree (۷:۱۸ . . .

Surely it, cannot be said that the pronoun indicates that Allah was in that place near (the tree.(۱)

Abdu 's-Salam al-Harawī(۲) said: "I said to ar-Rida (a.s.): 'O son of the Messenger of' Allah! tell me about the tree from which Adam and Hawwa' ate, what was it? Because people do have different views about it; some have narrated that it was a wheat-'.plant, and others have reported that it was the tree of envy.' He said: 'All this is true

I said: 'Then what do these explanations, with their differences, mean?' He said: 'O son of as-Salt! Verily the tree of the Garden bears (fruits of) many kinds; and it was a wheat-plant and (yet) it bore grapes; and it was not like a tree of this world. And when Allah raised the status of Adam by making the angels prostrate before him and by :placing him in the Garden, he said

Has Allah created any man superior than me?" And Allah knew what had came into" his mind; so He called out to him: "Raise your head, O Adam! and look at the pillar of :the Throne." So, he looked at the pillar of the Throne and found written on it

;There is no god except Allah"

۱- The first and third replies seem strange, to say the least. The author himself has said (while commenting on the phrase, " . . . the Satan made them both slip from it") that the order to "get down" or to "get out" may mean, "Get down from the company of the angels; or, get down from the heaven". But here he rejects the second alternative altogether! The third reply is based on القيـاس مع الفارق an unacceptable analogy - that which overlooks the important differences between the two sides. If

the Satan is governed by time and space how does it imply that Allah too should be governed by them? Moreover, in the same commentary the author has proved on the strength of this same verse that "the Satan had visited them near that tree in the Garden. He entered the Garden . . . (and) Adam, his wife and the Satan all were removed from the Garden together." This leaves us with the second reply, which is doubtlessly without any flaw and is supported by the Qur'an. (tr.)

٢- That is, Abu 's-Salt Abdu 's-Salam ibn Salih al-Harawī.

Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; 'Alī ibn Abī Talib is the Leader of the faithful, and his wife, Fatimah is the Chief of the women of the worlds, and al-Hasan and al-Husayn are the Chiefs of the youths of the people of the Garden." Adam said:

"O my Lord! who are they?" He, Mighty and Great is He said: "O Adam! they are (from) your off-springs; and they are better than you and all My creation; and if it were not (for) them, I would have not created you, nor the Garden, nor the fire, nor the heaven, nor the earth. So be careful not to look at them with envious eyes; otherwise, I will turn you out of My nearness."

But he looked at them with envious eyes and entertained the hope of (attaining to) their rank. So, the Satan got the better of him, until he ate from the forbidden tree; and got the better of Hawwa', and she looked at Fatimah with envious eyes until she too, like Adam, ate from the tree. Thereupon, Allah turned them out of His Garden, and got them down from His nearness to the earth.'"(١)

The author says: This matter has been described in many Tradition, some more detailed than this; others, more concise. In this tradition, the Imam has confirmed that the tree was the wheat-plant, and also that it was the tree of envy.

The former implies that the tree was not worthy of attention of the people of the Garden;

١- Uyūnu 'l-akhbar'

the later indicates that it was too lofty to come within the grasp of Adam and his wife (as a tradition says that it was the tree of the knowledge of Muhammad and his progeny).

Apparently, the two interpretations are totally different from each other, and the tradition seems a problematic one. But if you ponder on the covenant referred to earlier, you will see that both meanings are complementary, and not mutually exclusive.

Adam (a.s.) wanted to combine the pleasures of the Garden - a place of nearness to Allah, where it was necessary to always keep the covenant before one's eyes, and not to let one's attention divert to anyone or anything else - with the forbidden tree - which would bring all the world's troubles in its wake; but he failed in his endeavour, was sent down to the earth because he had been heedless of the said covenant and of its demands.

It was reserved for the Prophet to combine these two seemingly apposite factors; it was he who, for the first time, harmonized this world with the next, synchronized the matter with the spirit, and brought into being a whole man.

However, Allah again guided Adam aright, chose him for His vicegerency, and as a result of his repentance, raised him above the worldly desires and made him remember again the forgotten covenant.

"But he looked at them with envious eyes and entertained the hope of (attaining to) their rank": The second clause explains the first; Adam wanted that he

too should attain to that status; it was not that he was envious (i.e., had any ill will) against them. Envy is a vice, while aspiring to raise one's status is not.

Now let us look at the following two Tradition:

١. ath-Thumalī narrates from Abū Ja' far (a. s.) that he said: "Allah made a covenant with Adam that he should not go near the tree. But when the time came when, according to the knowledge of Allah, he was to eat of it, he forgot (the covenant) and ate from it.

And that is (the meaning of) the words of Allah:

And certainly We had covenanted unto Adam before, but he forgot; and We did not find in him any determination."(١)

٢. al-'Ayyashī narrated in his at-Tafsīr from one of the two (i.e., the fifth or the sixth) Imams, that he was asked as to why Allah punished Adam for his forgetfulness. He said: "He had not forgotten; and how could he forget when he had remembered it (very well) and (even) Iblīs had told him:

Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree except that you may not both become two angels or that you may (not) become of the immortals."

The way to harmonize these seemingly conflicting Tradition is clear if one applies to them the foregoing explanation.

Abū 's-Salt al-Harawī said: "al-Ma'mūn gathered for 'Alī ibn Mūsa ar-Rida (a.s.) people of various sects from among the Muslims, the Jews, the Christians, the Magians, the Sabaeans and all other religions. Nobody stood

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١- Kamalu 'd-dīn

for religious discussion with the Imam) but that he was forced to accept his (Imam's)) .arguments and was put to silence

Then stood before him 'Alī ibn Muhammad ibn al-Jahm and said to him: 'Do you believe in sinlessness of the prophets? O son of the Messenger of Allah!' He said: 'Yes.' He ('Alī ibn Muhammad ibn al-Jahm) said: 'Then what would you do with the words of '. . .?Allah: and Adam disobeyed his Lord, so he got astray

Then said our master, ar-Rida (a. s.): 'Woe unto you! O 'Alī! ! Have fear of Allah (in your heart) and do not ascribe indecencies to the prophets of Allah, and do not interpret by (!your own opinion the Book of Allah (Mighty and Great is He

:Verily Allah (Mighty and Great is He!) says

but none knows its interpretation except Allah and those who are firmly rooted in . . . .(knowledge (٣:٧

,As for the words of Allah

,and Adam disobeyed his Lord, so he got astray

the fact is that) Allah (Mighty and Great is He!) had created Adam (to be) His proof in) His earth and (to be) His vicegerent in His towns; He had not created him for the Garden; and the disobedience was (done) by Adam in the Garden, and not in the earth; (and it came to pass) so that the measures of the decree of Allah (Mighty and .Great is He) might be fulfilled

,So when he was sent down to the earth and was made (Allah's) proof and vicegerent

:he was protected (i.e. became sinless), as Allah says

Surely Allah chose Adam and Nūh and the descendants of Ibrahīm and the (descendants of 'Imran above all the worlds."' (٣:٣٣) (١

The author says: The sentence, "and the disobedience was . . . in the Garden", points to what we have already mentioned that there was no religious law ordained in the Garden; and that Adam (a.s.) even before his creation, was destined to live in the earth; and, therefore, the disobedience was of an advice, and not of an ordained law. In this context, there appears no reason why anyone should try (as someone has .done) to explain away this tradition in a round-about way

Alī ibn Muhammad ibn al-Jahm said: "I was present in the court of al-Ma'mūn; and 'Alī' ibn Mūsa was there with him. And al-Ma'mūn said to him: 'O son of the Messenger of '?Allah! Is it not your belief that the prophets are sinless

He said: 'Yes.' (al-Ma'mūn) said: 'Then what is the meaning of the words of Allah, the High: and Adam disobeyed his Lord, so he got astray?' (The Imam) said: 'Verily Allah said to Adam: Dwell you and your wife in the Garden and eat (you both) freely wherever you (two) wish and do not approach (you two) this tree,(pointing to a tree) .for then you (two) will be of the unjust

Allah did not say to him: Do not eat from this tree nor from another tree of its kind. And they did not eat

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١- al-Amalī, as-Sadūq

from it; they ate from another (similar) tree because the Satan whispered evil :suggestion to them and said

Your Lord has not forbidden you from this (i.e. the other similar) tree; He has only" forbidden you from approaching that one; and He has not forbidden you from that three except that you may not both become two angels or that you may not become of the immortals." And he swore to them both: "Most surely I am a sincere adviser to ".you

And Adam and Hawwa' had not seen before that anyone swearing falsely in the name of Allah; thus he caused them to fall by deceit and they ate from that (tree) because .they believed in his oath in the name of Allah

And it all happened before Adam was made a prophet, and it was not a big sin leading 'one to the fire; it was only a forgiven minor (sin) that is permissible to the prophets .before they begin receiving revelation

But when Allah chose him and made him prophet he became sinless, not committing any minor or major sin. Allah (Mighty and Great is He!) has said: Surely Allah chose Adam and Nūh and the descendants of Ibrahīm and the descendants of 'Imran above (all the worlds. . .' "('Uyūnu '۱-akhbar

The author says: as-Sadūq (may Allah have mercy on him!) after narrating the :tradition in full, has commented as follows

Strange that 'Alī ibn Muhammad ibn al-Jahm, in spite of his open hostility towards," and enmity and hatred of, Ahlu '۱-bayt

".a.s.), should narrate this tradition)

This comment only looks at the belief of the sinlessness of the prophets which this tradition purportedly proves; but as-Sadūq (may Allah have mercy on him!) did not .look deep into its implications

The reported reply is not in accord with the well-known belief of the Imams of Ahlu '۱-bayt, that all the prophets were fully protected from all major and minor sins before .as well as after getting the prophethood

Moreover, the reply presumes that the verse does not mean what it apparently says. According to this tradition, the verse, "Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree :except that you may not both become two angels . . .", should be read as follows

Your Lord has not forbidden you from this (i.e. the other similar) tree; He has only" forbidden you from approaching that one; and He has not forbidden you from that ". . . tree except that you may not both become two angels

Such deletions are against the norms of eloquence. The quoted speech of the Satan clearly shows that he was instigating them to eat from the very tree that was :forbidden, holding out to them the hope of becoming angels or immortals

Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree except that you may not both become" two angels or that you may (not) become of the immortals." "O Adam! shall I guide you "?to the tree of immortality and a kingdom which decays not

The narrator, that is, 'Alī ibn

Muhammad ibn al-Jahm, had himself been given the correct and complete answer in the court of al-Ma'mūn, as the preceding tradition shows; therefore, there is something wrong in this narration of his, although some parts may be somehow .interpreted correctly

As-Sadūq has narrated (through his chain) from al-Baqir (a.s.) , through his forefathers, from 'Alī (a.s.) that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) said: "Adam and Hawwa' stayed in the Garden, (till they were sent out of it) for seven hours according to the (counting of the) days of the world, until Allah sent them down on the same ".day

Abdullah ibn Sinan said: "Abū 'Abdillah (a.s.) was asked - and I was present there:' 'How long did Adam and his wife stay in the Garden until their mistake removed them from it?' He said: 'Verily Allah breathed His spirit into Adam after the midday on Friday; then created his wife from his lowest rib; then He made His angels prostrate before .him and placed him in His Garden the same day

And by God! he did not stay therein but six hours of the same day until he disobeyed Allah. Thereupon, Allah removed them both from it after the sunset, and they were put into the courtyard of the Garden till the morning; then their nakedness became :manifest to them; and their Lord called out to them

Did I not forbid you both from that tree?" Adam felt ashamed and bowed (his head)" and said: "Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves and

we confess our sins; therefore, forgive us (our sins)." Allah said to them: "Get down you both from My heavens to the earth; because no sinner shall remain in My (nearness - neither in My Garden nor in My heavens. " ' (at-Tafsīr, al-'Ayyashī

The author says: The tradition gives a new detail, that Adam and Hawwa' were removed first from the Garden to its courtyard and then from the courtyard to the :earth. There are some indications in the Qur'an to support this information

First: They were twice told to "get down" (vide vs. ۲:۳۶ and ۲:۳۸).It was a creative, and .not a legislative, order, and a creative order takes effect the instant it is given

If the first order told them to get down to the earth, there was no question of their not getting down to the earth at once; and, therefore, the second order would be superfluous. But in the light of this tradition the two commands would be perfectly in .order

Second: As mentioned in the commentary, this idea may be inferred from the changed verbs and pronouns of the verses. Allah describes in these words his talk with Adam :when he was being placed in the Garden

And We said: "O Adam! dwell you and your wife in the Garden . . . and do not approach " . . .(you two) this tree

But after they had eaten from the tree, their Lord called out to them: "Did I not forbid you both from that tree?" The verb, "We

said” of the former has been changed to “called out to them” in the latter; as the demonstrative pronoun, “this tree” (showing nearness) was replaced by “that tree” .((showing distance

These changes show that Adam had been removed, by the time of the second address, from his original place of nearness in the Garden to a distant place - which .the tradition describes as the courtyard

But this tradition says that Hawwa' was created from the lowest rib of Adam; it is a Biblical story which has been totally rejected by the Imams of Ahlu 'l-bayt, (as will be seen from the Tradition which will be quoted under the verses of the creation of Adam). This tradition, therefore, is unacceptable unless this expression is taken to mean that Hawwa' was created from the clay left over from the creation of Adam and .which was lying near his lowest rib

Whether he stayed in the Garden for six hours (as this tradition says) or seven (as the .former says) is not very important, because such things are mere approximation

It is reported from the fifth or the sixth Imam (peace be on them both) that he said about the verse, then Adam received (some) words from his Lord, that (the words :(were as follows

There is no god except Thee; Glory be to Thee, O Allah! and praise! I have committed“ evil and been unjust to myself; therefore, forgive me (my sin) and Thou art the best of .the forgivers

There is no god except Thee; Glory

be to Thee, O Allah! and praise! I have done wrong and been unjust to myself; therefore, have mercy on me, and Thou art the best of the forgivers. There is no god !except Thee; Glory to Thee, O Allah! and praise

I have committed evil and been unjust to myself; therefore, have mercy on me, and Thou art the best of those who have mercy. There is no god except Thee; Glory be to Thee, O Allah! and praise! I have done wrong and been unjust to myself; therefore, forgive me (my sin) and turn to me (with mercy); surely Thou, Thou alone, art oft-(returning (with mercy), the Merciful."(١)

The author says: This theme has been narrated also by as-Sadūq, al-'Ayyashī, al-Qummī and others; nearly the same thing has been narrated through the Sunnī .chains; and it may possibly be inferred from the apparent meaning, of the verses

al-Kulaynī has written in al-Kafī : "And another tradition says in respect of this verse: (Adam) had asked from (Allah) by the right of Muhammad and 'Alī and Fatimah and al-".Hasan and al-Husayn

The author says: This explanation too has been narrated by as-Sadūq, al-'Ayyashī, al-Qummī and others. A nearly similar tradition has been narrated through the Sunnī chains. it is reported in ad-Durru 'l-manthūr that the Prophet said: "When Adam committed the sin that he committed, he raised his head towards the heaven and :said

I beseach Thee, by the right of Muhammad, to forgive me.' Allah revealed to him (i.e.,' asked him through

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١- al-Kafī

revelation): 'And who is Muhammad?' He said: 'Blessed is Thy name! When Thou created me, I raised my head towards Thy Throne and saw written therein: There is .no god except Allah; Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah

Thus I knew that no one could be more honoured in Thy presence than him whose name Thou hadst placed with Thy name.' Thereupon, Allah revealed to him: 'O Adam! Verily he is the last of the prophets, from thy descendants; and if it were not for him, I " '.would have not created thee

The author says: Although these Tradition seem not to be in accord with the apparent meaning of the verse, on deeper consideration this explanation does not look so far-fetched. The sentence, "Then Adam received (some) words from his Lord", shows that he was taught those words by the Lord, and that he had got that knowledge before .his repentance

Also, it is known that Allah had taught him all the names. Allah told the angels that He :was going to make in the earth a vicegerent; they said

Wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood, while we" celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness? He said: "Surely I know what you do not .know" . And He taught Adam the names, all of them

There must have been something in those names to wipe out every injustice, to erase every sin and to cure every spiritual and moral disease; otherwise, the objection of the

angels could not be answered – Allah did not say a single word to refute the angels' .assertion; all He did was to teach Adam all the names

It means that those names could cure all the ills of humanity; the angels understood it and surrendered to the knowledge and wisdom of Allah. We have earlier explained that those names were sublime creations, hidden from the heavens and the earth; they were intermediaries to convey the grace and bounties of Allah to His creation; .and no creature would be able to attain to its perfection without their assistance

At this stage, we may refer to some Tradition which say that Adam saw the figures of Muhammad and his Ahlu 'l-bayt, and also their light at the time he was taught the names; and the ones which mention that he saw them when Allah took out his .offspring from his back; and the others which describe his seeing them in the Garden

However, Allah has not identified those words, and has used it as a common noun, "(some) words"; nevertheless, the Qur'an has clearly used the expression, "word ", for :an individual being, as for example, in the verse ۳:۴۵

Allah gives you good news of a word from Him whose name is the Messiah, 'Īsa son . . . of Maryam . . .

Some exegetes have written that the "words", mentioned in this verse, refer to the :plea of Adam and his wife reported in Chapter ۷

They said: "Our Lord! We have been unjust

to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly ” .be of the losers

But the sequence of events does not support this view. The repentance of Adam, according to the narrative of Chapter ٢, had occurred after his coming to the earth. The verse (٢:٣٧) describing the repentance comes after the verse (٢:٣۶) that mentions (his descent to the earth.(١)

But they had uttered that plea while they were still in the Garden, before coming down to the earth. The plea is given in verse ٧:٢٣; and the order to “get down” comes after that in verse ٧:٢۴. Apparently, this plea was in response to their admonition by :Allah

Did I not forbid you both from that tree . . . ?”; they wanted to declare their servitude“ and to surrender themselves to Allah; acknowledging that all the authority was in the hands of Allah and He might do what He pleased; He was their Lord, and they had put .themselves in danger of loss by being unjust to themselves

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: “Verily, Mūsa asked his Lord to let him meet Adam; and he was joined with him (i.e., Adam). Mūsa said to him: 'O father! Did Allah not create you with His hand, and breathe into you of His spirit; and make the angels prostrate before ?you, and order you not to eat of the tree

Then why did you disobey Him?' (Adam) said: 'O Mūsa! How long before my creation did you find

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It is not in accord with the author's earlier assertion that the verse ٢:٣۶ describes - ١ Adam's removal from the earlier-held place of honour to the courtyard of the Garden; after which he learned “some words” from Allah and repented (٢:٣٧); and it was later (that he was sent down from the courtyard to the Garden (٢:٣٨). (tr

my mistake (mentioned) in the Torah?' He said: 'Thirty thousand years before.' (Adam) said: 'That is it."' as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "Thus refuted Adam the argument of Mūsa."(١)

The author says: as-Suyūtī has narrated in ad-Durru 'l-manthūrapproximately similar Tradition, through various chains, from the Prophet.

Al-Baqīr (a.s.) said: "By God, Allah had surely created Adam for the world, and He gave him place in the Garden, in order that he might disobey Him and thus He might return him to that for which He had created him." (٢)

The author says: A tradition of the same theme, narrated by al-'Ayyashī from as-Sadiq (a.s.), concerning an angel friend of Adam, has been quoted earlier.

A Syrian asked 'Alī (a.s.) as to which valley in the earth was the most honoured. He (a.s.) said: "The valley called Sarandīb wherein Adam descended from the heaven."(٣)

The author says: In contrast to it, there are numerous Tradition showing that he had descended at Mecca (and some of them have been quoted above). May be, he first came down to Sarandīb and then got down to Mecca.

It has been reported by at-Tabaranī, Abu 'sh-Shaykh (in hisal-'Azamah) and Ibn Marduwayh, from Abū Dharr, that he said: "I said: 'O Messenger of Allah! What do you say, was Adam a prophet?' He said: 'Yes. He was a prophet (and) an apostle; Allah talked to him before; He had told him: "O Adam! dwell you and your wife in the Garden."

The author says: The Sunnīs have narrated almost similar Tradition through

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١- at-Tafsīr, al-Qummī
٢- 'Ilalu 'sh-shara' i'
٣- al-Ihtijaj

.various chains

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۴۰–۴۴

point

(۴۰) يا بَنِى إِسْرَائِيلَ اذْكُرُواْ نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِى أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَوْفُواْ بِعَهْدِى أُوفِ بِعَهْدِكُمْ وَإِيَّاىَ فَارْهَبُونِ

(۴۱) وَآمِنُواْ بِمَا أَنزَلْتُ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا مَعَكُمْ وَلاَ تَكُونُواْ أَوَّلَ كَافِرٍ بِهِ وَلاَ تَشْتَرُواْ بِآيَاتِى ثَمَنًا قَلِيلاً وَإِيَّاىَ فَاتَّقُونِ

(۴۲) وَلاَ تَلْبِسُواْ الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُواْ الْحَقَّ وَأَنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

(۴۳) وَأَقِيمُواْ الصَّلاةَ وَآتُواْ الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُواْ مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ

(۴۴) أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنسَوْنَ أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلاَ تَعْقِلُونَ

O children of Israel! Remember My bounties which I bestowed on you, and be faithful to (your) covenant with Me, I will fulfil (My) covenant with you; and of Me, Me alone, .(should you be afraid (۴۰

And believe in what I have sent down verifying that which is with you, and be not the first to deny it, neither take a mean price in exchange for My signs; and Me, Me alone, .(should you fear (۴۱

And do not mix up the truth with the falsehood, nor hide the truth while you know (it) .((۴۲

.(And keep up prayer and pay the zakdt and bow down with those who bow down (۴۳

What! do you enjoin men to be good and forget your own selves while you read the (Book? Have you then no sense? (۴۴

General Comment

Now begins the rebuking of the Jews that continues for more than a hundred verses. Allah reminds them of the bounties bestowed, of the honours given; contrasting it with their ingratitude and disobedience; showing how at every juncture they paid the favours of Allah with disregard of their covenant, open rebellion against divine

.commands and even with polytheism

The

p: ۳۰۰

series reminds them of twelve events of their history - like rescuing them from Pharaoh and his people by parting the river, drowning of Pharaoh and his army, the appointed rendezvous at the mount Sina'i, the Jews' starting calf-worship in Mūsa's absence, and Mūsa's order to them to kill themselves, their demand from Mūsa to show their Lord to them face to face, their death by lightning and then their arising from dead etc. - all of which shows how they were chosen to receive the especial .favours of Allah

But their ingratitude runs parallel to it. They repeatedly broke the covenants made with Allah, committed capital sins, hideous crimes and shameful deeds; more despic... able. Was their spiritual poverty and moral bankruptcy - in open defiance to their book and total disregard to the reason? It was all because their hearts were hardened, .their souls lost and their endeavours worthless

Commentary

covenant) literally means = العَهد) :Qur'an: . . . and be faithful to (your) covenant with Me guarding and"al-'Ahd" maintenance. By association it has come to mean covenant, .oath, testament, will, encounter, house, etc

fear) is opposite of = الرَّهبه) "Qur'an: . . . and of Me, . . . should you be afraid: "ar-Rah-bah .(desire =الرغبه) ar-raghbah

Qur'an: . . . and be not the first to deny it: That is, first among the people of the book, or first among your own people. This firstness is not all-inclusive, because the .disbelievers of Mecca had rejected the Message before the Jews

point

(۴۵) وَاسْتَعِينُواْ بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلاَةِ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلاَّ عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ

(۴۶) الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُم مُّلاَقُو رَبِّهِمْ وَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

And seek assistance through patience and prayer; and most surely it is a hard thing, except for the humble ones (۴۵),

who know that they shall meet their Lord and that they shall return to Him (۴۶).

Commentary

Qur'an: And seek assistance through patience and prayer: Man seeks assistance in such affairs and tasks as he cannot manage alone, and in hardships and difficulties which he cannot overcome himself. In reality there is no helper except Allah.

Man can, therefore, manage all his affairs and overcome all his difficulties by courage and steadfastness (i.e. by patience) and by looking towards Allah (i.e. by prayer).

These two factors are the best way to get assistance: patience makes even the great misfortunes look trivial, and putting all his confidence in Allah awakens the spirit of faith; and thus man comes to realize that the cause which he is relying upon can never fail to produce the desired effect.

Qur'an: and most surely it is a hard thing except for the humble ones: The pronoun, it, refers to the "prayer". It is difficult to relate it to "seeking the assistance", because it will then cover patience too, and the word "the humble ones" will not look appropriate - humbleness does not fit very much with patience.

The word used here for humbleness is "khushū" (الخشوع); "khudu" (الخضوع) too has the same meaning but with one difference: while the latter shows itself in the

.limbs of the body, the former refers to the inner feeling

Qur’an: who know that they shall meet their Lord . . .: The word used in this verse for "knowing" is "yazunnūn" (يظنون);

it literally means “they think”. But the context, that is, the belief in the hereafter, demands a firm conviction that would leave no room for any doubt or supposition. :Allah says

.(and they are sure of the hereafter (۲:۴

Or, may be, Allah, by using this word, makes us realize that even an elementary idea of the hereafter is sufficient to create in a man humility and humbleness before his :Lord. Many a knowledge comes to man in stages

;first he becomes aware of an idea (۱)

;then he has some doubts about its correctness (۲)

;then he becomes inclined to accept it (۳)

then gradually the possibility of his accepting the opposite view vanishes (۴) completely and he becomes firmly convinced of the truth of that idea – and this firm .conviction is called knowledge

If such knowledge is concerned with some frightening affair, then his worry and disquiet will begin as soon as he reaches the third stage when he is only inclined to .accept it – is only “thinking” that probably it may be true

This Qur'anic expression, in other words, says that man, for showing humbleness before Allah, needs only to be aware of the idea that there is a Lord Whom he may return to after his death. In this context only a strong supposition should be enough

to make him desist from disobeying his Lord; it would not be necessary, for this .purpose, to reach the stage of firm knowledge

:From this point of view, the verse looks almost similar to the verse

therefore, whoever hopes to meet his Lord, he should do good deeds, and not join . . . .(any one in the worship of his Lord (۱۸:۱۱۰

The above discourse is based on the assumption that the words, “they shall meet their Lord . . .”, refer to the Day of Resurrection. But if they are interpreted in, another way (as we shall describe in Chapter ۷), there should be no difficulty at all in its .explanation

Tradition

as-Sadiq (a. s.) said: “Whenever 'Alī (a.s.) faced a difficulty, he used to stand up for the prayer and then recite this verse: and seek assistance through patience and (prayer.”(۱

The same Imam said about this verse: “The patience means fasting.” Also he said: “When a man is confronted by a hard misfortune, he should fast. Surely Allah says: (and seek assistance through patience, that is, fast.”(۲

The author says: al-'Ayyashī too has narrated the theme of these two Tradition in his .at-Tafsīr. Interpretation of “patience” as fast is based on the “flow” of the Qur'an

Abu 'l-Hasan (a.s.) said about this verse: “The patience means fast; when a man is visited by a hardship or misfortune, he should fast; surely Allah says: And seek assistance through patience and prayer; and most surely it is a hard thing except for .the humble ones

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al-Kafī -۱

al-Kafī -۲

And the humble one is he who shows humility in his prayer, turning all his attention to it; and it means the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) and the Leader of the faithful ((a.s.)."(1)

The author says: The Imam has inferred from this verse the desirability of fasting and praying when one is facing any hardship or turmoil; and likewise, the desirability of seeking the divine help through the medium of the Prophet and 'Alī (a.s.) at that time. In this way, the tradition interprets the fast and the prayer as the Prophet and 'Alī .(.(a.s

Alī (a.s.) said about the verse, who know that they shall meet their Lord . . . : Allah says' (الظن) that they are sure that they would be resurrected. And the supposition az-zann (.means certainty. (ibid

The author says: as-Sadūq also has narrated this tradition, al-Baqīr (a.s.) said that this verse was revealed about 'Alī, 'Uthman ibn Maz'ūn, 'Ammar ibn Yasir and (some of) .(their friends(2

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۴۷-۴۸

point

(۴۷) يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اذْكُرُواْ نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنِّي فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

(۴۸) وَاتَّقُواْ يَوْماً لاَّ تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَن نَّفْسٍ شَيْئاً وَلاَ يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَاعَةٌ وَلاَ يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلاَ هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ

O Children of Israel! Call to mind My favour which I bestowed on you and that I made .(you excel the nation (۴۷

And be on your guard against the day when one soul shall not avail another in the least; neither shall intercession on its behalf be accepted, nor shall any compensation be taken from it, nor

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1- al-'Ayyashī

al-Manaqib, Ibn Shahrashūb -٢

.(shall they be helped (۴۸

Commentary

Qur'an: And be on your guard against the day when one soul shall not avail another in :the least

The temporal power and authority, with all its various systems and varying conditions, is based on a necessity of life - the only justification of this institution is that it fulfils .this need in the framework of the prevailing factors of the society

It some times exchanges a commodity for another, gives up a benefit for another, substitutes an order with another - without any hard and fast criterion to regulate .such dispensations. The same phenomenon is observed in their judiciary

Logically, a crime must be recompensed with punishment. Yet some times the judge, because of some extraneous reasons, decides not to punish the criminal. Some times the criminal rouses in the judge an overwhelming feeling of pity by his passionate appeal for mercy. Or he wins him over by bribe which induces him to deliver an unjust .judgement

Or an influential man intercedes with the judge on behalf of the said criminal and the judge cannot ignore that intercession. Or, the said criminal becomes a state witness leading to the conviction of even greater criminals, and is himself, thus, released .without any punishment

Or his tribe or colleagues get him freed from the clutches of the authorities. Whatever the cause may be, it is a well-established custom in the worldly governments and .human societies to let the wrong-doers go free at times

The ancient tribes and the idol-worshippers believed that the

life hereafter was an extension of this one; that the customs of this world were valid for that one too, and that the next world was permeated by the same actions and .reactions which prevailed in this one

Thus they offered sacrifices and offerings to their deities seeking forgiveness for their sins or assistance in their needs; the offerings were supposed to intercede on their behalf. Some times a sin was expiated or help was sought by offering even a human .sacrifice

They carried this idea of continuation of the life so far as to bury with a man all types of necessities of life, not forgetting his ornaments and arms, in order that he might use them on his onward journey; some times even his concubines and soldiers were .buried alive with him to keep him company

You may see a lot of such finds in archaeological museums around the world. Some such ideas have persisted even among the Muslims - with all their diverse cultures .and languages, albeit in modified forms

The Qur'an has rejected all such superstitious beliefs and baseless ideas in no :uncertain terms

• . . . and the command on that day shall be entirely Allah's (۸۲:۱۹).

• . . . and they see the chastisement and their ties are cut asunder (۲:۱۶۶).

• And certainly you have come to Us alone as We created you at first, and you have left behind your backs the things which We gave you, and We do not see with you your intercessors about whom

you asserted that they were (Allah's) associates in respect to you; certainly the ties between you are now cut off and what you asserted is gone from you (۶:۹۴).

• There shall every soul become acquainted with what is sent before, and they shall be brought back to Allah, their true Master and what they did fabricate shall escape from them (۱۰:۳۰).

There are many similar verses; and they show that the life hereafter is cut off from the natural causes which govern this life, and is quite separate from material connections. Once this principle is understood all the above-mentioned myths would automatically be cleared away. But the Qur'an is not content with this general declaration; it refutes each and every myth and superstition described above:

• And be on your guard against the day when one soul shall not avail another in the least; neither shall intercession on its behalf be accepted, nor shall any compensation be taken from it, nor shall they be helped (۱۲:۴۸).

• . . . before the day comes in which there is no bargaining, neither any friendship nor intercession (۲:۲۵۴).

• The day on which a friend shall not avail (his) friend aught . . . (۴۴:۴۱).

• . . . there shall be no saviour for you from Allah . . . (۴۰:۳۳).

• What is the matter with you that you do not help each other? Nay! on this day they are submissive (۳۷:۲۵- ۲۶).

• And they worship beside Allah what can neither harm them nor profit them, and

they say: “These are our intercessors with Allah.” Say: “Do you (presume to) inform Allah of what He knows not in the heavens and the earth?” Glory be to Him, and supremely exalted is He above what they set up with Him. (۱۰:۱۸).

- . . . the unjust shall not have any friend nor any intercessors who should be obeyed (۴۰:۱۸)).

- So we have no intercessors, nor a true-friend (۲۶:۱۰۰-۱۰۱).

There are many other verses of the same theme, all rejecting the intercession on the Day of Resurrection. On the other hand, the Qur'an does not totally reject the intercession; rather it confirms it to a certain extent. For example, it says:

- Allah is He Who created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in six periods and He is firmly established on the throne; you have not besides Him any guardian or any intercessors; will you not then mind? (۳۲:۴)

- . . . there is no guardian for them, nor any intercessor besides Him (۶:۵۱).

- Say: 'Allah's is the intercession altogether” (۳۹:۴۴).

- . . . whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them (۲:۲۵۵).

- Surely your Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods; and He is firmly established on the throne, regulating the affair; there is no intercessor except after His permission (۱۰:۳).

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And they say: “The Beneficent God had taken to Himself a son.” Glory be to Him! Nay! they are honoured servants; they do not precede Him in speech and (only) according to His commandment do they act. He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they do not intercede except for whom He approves, and for fear of Him .(they tremble (۲۱:۲۶-۲۸

- And those whom they call upon besides Him have no authority for intercession, but .(he who bears witness of the truth, and they know (him) (۴۳:۸۶

- They shall have no authority for intercession, save he who has made a covenant .(with the Beneficent God (۱۹:۸۷

- On that day shall no intercession avail except of him whom the Beneficent God allows and whose word He is pleased with. He knows what is before them and what is .(behind them, while they do not comprehend Him in knowledge (۲۰:۱۰۹-۱۱۰

- .(And intercession will not avail aught with Him save of him whom He permits (۳۴:۲۳

- And how many an angel is there in the heavens whose intercession does not avail at .(all except after Allah has given permission to whom He pleases and chooses (۵۳:۲۶

Some of these verses (like the first three) say that intercession is reserved for Allah, while the rest declare that others too may intercede with Allah's permission. In any case, all of them confirm the intercession per se. How are these verses related to the ?preceding ones which totally reject intercession

It is exactly

the same relation that exists between the verses that say that the knowledge of unseen is reserved to Allah and those which declare that others too may have that :knowledge with the permission of Allah. As Allah says

* .(Say: "No one in the heaven and the earth knows the unseen but Allah" (۲۷:۶۵

* .(And with Him are the keys of the unseen, does not know it any except He (۶:۵۹

* The Knower of the unseen! so He does not reveal His secrets to any, except to him .(whom He chooses of an apostle (۷۲:۲۷

The same is the case with various verses on the subjects of creating, sustaining, giving death, causity, command, authority and similar things. Some verses reserve them for Allah; while some say that others too may do these things. It is a well-known style of the Qur'an: first it rejects the idea that anyone other than Allah has any virtue or perfection; thereafter it confirms the same virtue or perfection for others .depending on the permission and pleasure of Allah

When read together, the verses show that nobody has any virtue by his own power and right; whatever excellence there may be, he has got it because Allah has given it to him. Allah puts much emphasis to this fact; He attaches the proviso of His will even :for those things which are firmly decreed by Him. For example

So as to those who are unhappy, they shall be in the fire; for them shall be sighing and groaning in

it; abiding therein so long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord .please; surely your Lord is the (mighty) doer of what He intends

And as to those who are made happy, they shall be in the garden, abiding in it as long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord please; a gift which shall .(never be cut off (١١:١٠۶-١٠٨

Note that abiding for ever is made dependent on the pleasure of Allah, even in case of the garden, although it is a gift which shall never be cut off. It emphasizes the fact that even when Allah firmly decrees a thing, it does not pass out of His control or ;authority

.(surely your Lord is (mighty) doer of what He intends (١١:١٠٧

When Allah gives a thing, it does not go out of His total possession. When He denies !some thing to someone, it is not done to protect Himself against any need or poverty

In short, the verses that reject intercession - albeit talking about the Day of Resurrection - do so in the context of intercession independent of Allah's authority; while the ones proving it, prove it basically for Allah and then, depending on His .pleasure, for others

.Thus the intercession is proved for other than Allah with His permission

Now we should see what is the meaning of intercession? Who may intercede? On ?behalf of whom? And when? How is it related to the divine forgiveness

?What is the meaning of intercession .١

"ash-Shafa 'ah" (الشّفاعه = "intercession) is derived from "ash-shaf" (الشّفع)

which means “even” as opposed to odd – the interceder adds his own recommendation to the plea of the petitioner; in this way the number of pleaders becomes even, and the weak plea of the petitioner is strengthened by the prestige of .the intercessor

We are accustomed in our social and communal life to seek others' intercession and help for fulfilling our needs. We resort to it to get an advantage or to ward off a disadvantage. Here we are not talking about an advantage or a disadvantage, a benefit or a harm that is caused by natural causes, like hunger and thirst, heat or cold, illness or health; because in such cases we get what we want through its natural .remedies, like eating and drinking, wearing clothes, getting treatment and so on

What we are talking here about is the benefit and harm, punishment and reward resulting from the social laws made by civil authorities. Rising from the very relationship of mastership-and-servitude – and for that matter, between every ruler and ruled – there are some commandments, orders and prohibitions; one who follows and obeys them is praised and rewarded, and the one who disobeys is condemned .and punished; that reward or punishment may be either material or spiritual

When a master orders his servant to do or not to do a thing, and the servant obeys him he gets its reward; and if he disobeys he is punished. Whenever a rule is made, the punishment for its infringement is laid down

.too. This is the foundation which all the authorities are built upon

When a man wants to get a material or spiritual benefit but is not suitably qualified for it; or when he desires to ward off a harm which is coming to him because of his disobedience, but has no shield to protect himself, then comes the time for .intercession

In other words, when he wants to get a reward without doing his task, or to save himself from punishment without performing his duty, then he looks for someone to intercede on his behalf. But intercession is effective only if the person for whom one intercedes is otherwise qualified to get the reward and has already established a .relationship with the authority

If an ignorant person desires appointment to a prestigious academic post, no intercession can do him any good; nor can it avail in case of a rebellious traitor who shows no remorse for his misdeeds and does not submit to the lawful authorities. It clearly shows that intercession works as a supplement to the cause; it is not an .independent cause

The effect of an intercessor's words depends on one or the other factor which may have some influence upon the concerned authority; in other words, intercession must have a solid ground to stand upon. The intercessor endeavours to find a way to the heart of the authority concerned, in order that the said authority may give the reward to, or waive the punishment of, the person who is the subject

.of intercession

An intercessor does not ask the master to nullify his mastership or to release the servant from his servitude; nor does he plead with him to refrain from laying down rules and regulations for his servants or to abrogate his commandments (either generally or especially in that one case), in order to save the wrong-doer from the due consequences; nor does he ask him to discard the canon of reward and punishment, .((either generally or in that particular case

In short, intercession can interfere with neither the institution of mastership and ser- vantship nor the master's authority to lay down the rules; nor can it effect the system of reward and punishment. These three factors are beyond the jurisdiction of .intercession

What an intercessor does is this: He accepts the inviolability of the above-mentioned three aspects. Then he looks at one or more of the following factors and builds his :intercession on that basis

a. He appeals to such attributes of the master as give rise to forgiveness, e.g., his .nobility, magnanimity and generosity

b. He draws attention to such characteristics of the servant as justify mercy and .pardon, e.g., his wretchedness, poverty, low status and misery

.c. He puts at stake his own prestige and honour in the eyes of the master

Thus, the import of intercession is like this: I cannot and do not say that you should forget your mastership over your servant or abrogate your commandment or nullify .the system of reward and punishment

What I ask of you is to forgive this

defaulting servant of yours because you are magnanimous and generous, and because no harm would come to you if you forgive his sins; and/or because your servant is a wretched creature of low status and steeped in misery; and it is befitting of a master like you to ignore the faults of a slave like him; and/or because you have bestowed on me a high prestige, and I implore you to forgive and pardon him in .honour of my intercession

The intercessor, in this way, bestows precedence on the factors of forgiveness and pardon over those of legislation and recompense. He removes the case from the latter's jurisdiction putting it under former's influence. As a result of this shift, the .consequences of legislation (reward and punishment) do not remain applicable

The effect of intercession is, therefore, based on shifting the case from the jurisdiction of reward and punishment to that of pardon and forgiveness; it is not a .(confrontation between one cause (divine legislation) and the other (intercession

By now it should have been clear that intercession too is one of the causes; it is the .intermediate cause that connects a distant cause to its desired effect

:Allah is the ultimate Cause. This causality shows itself in two ways

First: In creation. Every cause begins from Him and ends up to Him; He is the first and the final Cause. He is the real Creator and Originator. All other causes are mere .channels to carry His boundless mercy and limitless bounty to His creatures

Second: In

legislation. He, in His mercy, established a contact with His creatures; He laid down the religion, sent down His commandments, and prescribed suitable reward and appropriate punishment for His obedient and disobedient servants; He sent prophets and apostles to bring us good tidings and to warn us of the consequences of .transgression

The prophets and apostles conveyed to us His message in the best possible way. Thus :His proof over us was complete

and the word of your Lord has been accomplished with truth and justice, there is none .(to change His words. . . (۶:۱۱۵

.Both aspects of causality of Allah may be, and in fact are, related to intercession

Intercession in creation: Quite obviously the intermediary causes of creation are the .۱ conduits that bring the divine mercy, life, sustenance and other bounties to the creatures; and as such they are intercessors between the Creator and the created. :Some Qur'anic verses too are based on this very theme

whatever, is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; who is he that can ;(intercede with Him but by His permission (۲:۲۵۵

Surely your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and the earth in six periods, and He is firmly established on throne, regulating the affair; there is no intercessor except .(after His permission (۱۰:۳

Intercession in the sphere of creation is only the intermediation of causes between the Creator and the created thing and effect, in bringing it into being and regulating its .affairs

,Intercession in legislation: Intercession, as analysed earlier .۲

:is effective in this sphere too. It is in this context that Allah says

On that day shall no intercession avail except of him whom the Beneficent God allows ;(and whose word He is pleased with (۲۰: ۱۰۹

; (And intercession will not avail aught with Him save of him whom He permits (۳۴:۲۳

And how many an angel is there in the heavens whose intercession does not avail at ;(all except after Allah has given permission to whom He pleases and chooses(۵۳:۲۶

; (and they do not intercede except for him whom He approves . . . (۲۱:۲۸ . . .

And those whom they call upon besides Him have no authority for intercession, but he .(who bears witness of the truth and they know(him) (۴۳:۸۶

These verses clearly affirm intercessory role for various servants of Allah both men and angels - with divine permission and pleasure. It means that Allah has given them some power and authority in this matter, and to Him belongs all the kingdom and all .the affairs

Those intercessors may appeal to Allah's mercy, forgiveness and other relevant attributes to cover and protect a servant who otherwise would have deserved .punishment because of his sins and transgressions

That intercession would transfer his case from the general law of recompense to the special domain of grace and mercy. (It has already been explained that the effect of intercession is based on shifting a case from the former's to the latter's jurisdiction; it is not a confrontation between one law and the other.) Allah

:clearly says

.(so these are they of whom Allah changes the evil deeds to good ones (۲۵:۷۰ . . .

Allah has the power to change one type of deed into other, in the same way as He :may render an act null and void. He says

And We will proceed to what they have done of deeds, so We shall render them as ; (scattered floating dust (۲۵:۲۳

; (so He rendered their deeds null (۴۷:۹ . . .

If you avoid the great sins which you are forbidden, We will expiate from you your ;((small) sins (۴:۳۱

Surely Allah does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, and . (forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases (۴:۴۸

The last quoted verse is certainly about the cases other than true belief and repentance, because with belief and repentance even polytheism is forgiven, like any :other sin. Also Allah may nurture a small deed to make it greater than the original

;(These shall be granted their reward twice (۲۸:۵۴

.(Whoever brings a good deed, he shall have ten like it (۶:۱۶۰

:Likewise, He may treat a nonexistent deed as existing

And (as for) those who believe and their offspring follow them in faith, We will unite with them their offspring and We will not diminish to them aught of their work; every .(man is responsible for what he has done (۵۲:۲۱

To make a long story short, Allah does what He please, and decrees as He wills. Of ,course, He does so persuant to His servants' interest

and in accordance with an intermediary cause - and intercession of the intercessors (e.g., the prophets, the friends of Allah and those who are nearer to Him) is one of .those causes, and certainly no rashness or injustice is entailed therein

It should have been clear by now that intercession, in its true sense, belongs to Allah only; all His attributes are intermediaries between Him and His creatures and are the channels through which His grace, mercy and decrees pass to the creatures; He is the :real and all-encompassing intercessor

;(Say: "Allah's is the intercession altogether" (۳۹:۴۴

;(youhave not besides Him any guardian or any intercessor (۳۲:۴ . . .

.(there is no guardian for them nor any intercessor besides Him (۶:۵۱ . . .

.The intercessors, other than Allah, get that right by His permission, by His authority

In short, intercession with Him is a confirmed reality - in cases where it does not go .against the divine glory and honour

The Objections Against Intercession .۲

point

Intercession, as explained above, is a confirmed reality -not in every case but in approved ones. The Qur'an and the Tradition do not prove more than this. A little meditation on the meaning of intercession is enough to lead to this conclusion. Intercession is mediation in causality and effectiveness. Obviously causality cannot be .limitless and unconditional

No cause can be a cause of every effect, nor can an effect be governed by every cause - otherwise it would render the system of cause and effect null and void. Those who do not believe in intercession have

fallen in this very trap – they thought that we affirm the intercession in its totality without any condition or limit. All their objections emanates from this very :misunderstanding

First Objection

point

Allah has threatened to punish the wrongdoer; now supposedly He waives the punishment on the Day of Judgement. The question is whether this waiver is justice or injustice. If it is justice, then the original promise of punishment would be injustice, quite unworthy of divine majesty; and if it is injustice, then the intercession of the prophets, for example, would be a plea for injustice, and it is a folly that should not be .attributed to the prophets

Reply

First: What will they say about those orders that are given only to test the loyalty of a servant and are changed at the last moment, like the order to Ibrahīm to kill Isma'īl? Surely its waiver too like the original order was based on justice. Such orders are .given only to test the hidden quality of the servant concerned

Likewise, it may be said that salvation is written for all the believers. The laws of the shari `ah were ordained with punishments prescribed for transgressors – in order .that the disbelievers should perish because of their disbelief

As for the obedient believers their rank would be enhanced by their good deeds. And as for the disobedient believers, they would be rescued by intercession: that intercession might be effective either totally or partially; in later case, they would have to suffer some of the punishments in al-Barzakh

.or on the Day of Judgement itself and then they would get deliverance

Thus the original law with the prescribed punishment for the defaulters is nothing but .justice, and, the subsequent waiver of that punishment too is nothing but justice

Second: The waiver of the prescribed punishment as a result of intercession could be compared with the previous order – in being based on justice or injustice – only if that waiver were a contradiction of the previous order. But we have explained that it is not .so

Intercession is not a contradiction of, or confrontation between one cause (divine legislation) and the other (intercession); it is in fact shifting his case from one .(jurisdiction (reward and punishment) to the other (mercy and forgiveness

Second Objection

point

It is the established practice of Allah, that His actions are always safe from contradiction and conflict. Whatever He decrees and orders, without any exception, runs on an established pattern. And this is the foundation which the system of cause :and effect has been built upon. Allah says

This is a straight path with Me, Surely, as regards My servants, thou hast no authority over them except those who follow thee of the deviators. And surely Hell is the ;(promised place of them all (۱۵:۴۱-۴۳

And (know) that this is My path, the straight one, therefore, follow it, and follow not ;((other) ways, for they will scatter you away from His way (۶:۱۵۳

For you shall not find any alteration an the course of Allah; and you shall not find any change in

.(the course of Allah (۳۵:۴۳

And intercession, if effective, would certainly create conflict and contradiction in the actions of Allah: If intercession caused waiver of punishment from all the sinners, of all their sins, then it would defeat the very purpose of the sharī`ah and would turn the whole system into a joke.

And if only some of the sinners or only some of their sins were forgiven, then there would occur contradiction in divine actions and change and alteration in Allah's established course. Certainly, all the sinners are transgressors and every sin is disobedience of divine command. Therefore, forgiving only some of them or only some of their sins, because of intercession, would be impossible.

Intercession is used in this life of ours, where people are influenced by their desires or social connections. It cannot work in the affairs of the sharī`ah nor can it influence the divine judgement in any way.

Reply

No one doubts that the path of Allah is straight and His course without any change or conflict. But it should not be forgotten that this one and unchanged course is based on all His relevant attributes, not on only one or two of them. Allah is the One Who bestows on every creature diverse things like life, death, sustenance, bounty and so on.

These are the decrees that are contradictory or unrelated to each other; they do not have the same connection with the issuing authority i.e. God. Otherwise the relationship of cause and effect would become null and void.

For

example, Allah does not restore a sick man to health by virtue of His death-giving power; rather He does so because He is Merciful, Benevolent, Giver of health and Bestower of bounties. Likewise, He does not destroy an arrogant tyrant by His mercy .and beneficence, but because He is the Avenger, the Omnipotent and the Subduer

The Qur'an is the best witness of this fact: Whenever it ascribes an event or affair to Him, it invariably always mentions the appropriate attribute by which that affair or .event was decreed and managed

You may say that every affair and every thing is decreed by Allah because of its underlying benefit and good. And He does whatever He does by His all relevant .attributes, and not by only one or some of them

There is always action and reaction between benefits and good of various courses of a certain affair; and Allah issues His decree as a result of His knowledge that .encompasses all those aspects; His vision is not limited to one or two sides only

Had there been one fixed cause or attribute, there would have been no change or difference between a believer and a non-believer, between a pious person and a debauchee; but there are numerous causes and attributes, and their sum-total often .has effects quite different from the effect of its individual parts

Therefore, intercession, and the consequent waiver of punishment - based on sum-total of numerous causes like mercy, pardon, judgement, and giving everyone his due right - does not entail

.any change in the established course, nor any deviation from the right path

Third Objection

point

Intercession, according to common understanding, prevails upon the authority to do against his original will. In other words, the original will is abrogated and changed .because of the intercessor

A just judge would never accept an intercession unless his knowledge is changed, e.g., his original judgement was wrong, and then he was made to realize that justice .demanded a course opposite to his original plan

An unjust judge would accept intercession of his friends knowing fully well that the course suggested was wrong; but he values his personal relations more than the demands of justice and equity. Obviously, both these alternatives are impossible so far as Allah is concerned; His will is related to His knowledge, and His knowledge is .eternal and unchangeable

Reply

Intercession has nothing to do with change of will or knowledge. What actually changes is the thing willed about or known. Allah knows that a certain man will pass through various stages in his life; for a time his condition will be excellent - and Allah wills about him a certain will; and He knows that later his condition will change - and .(He wills about him another will; and every day He is in a (new) state (of glory

:And He has said

Allah effaces what He pleases and establishes (likewise), and with Him is the basis of ;(the Book (۱۳:۳۹

.(Nay, both His hands are spread out, He expends as He pleases (۶:۶۴

The same happens with our knowledge and

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will. We know that soon night will come and we will not be able to see in darkness, but a few hours later the sun will rise dispelling the darkness. When night comes our will is directed to light a lamp, and later when the morning comes the will is directed to extinguish that lamp. In this case, there was no change at all in our knowledge and will; what changed was the objects of that knowledge and will.

And consequently they ceased to be governed by that knowledge and that will. After all, not every knowledge is related to every known object, nor every will is connected to every purpose.

What is impossible for Allah is disagreement of His knowledge with the thing known, or of His will with its object – while that thing or object remains unchanged. In other words, it is impossible for Him to be mistaken in His knowledge or for His will to be ineffective.

We see an apparition far away and take it to be a man; on coming nearer we find that it was a horse. In this case, our “knowledge” did not agree with its object; it was a mistake. Likewise, we intend to do a certain work, then we realize that it would be wrong to do so; here our “will” was cancelled and became ineffective.

But in these cases the objects of our knowledge and will had not changed. Such “disagreement” is certainly impossible for Allah. But as we have seen, intercession and

.the subsequent waiver of punishment does not come into this category

Fourth Objection

point

Had Allah promised intercession, or had His prophets brought this message to their nations, the people would have been emboldened to disobey the commandments of .Allah, and to transgress the limits of the sharī`ah

It would have defeated the whole purpose behind the institutions of prophethood and religion. If we are to avoid this inherent difficulty, we shall have to interpret the relevant Qur'anic verses and Tradition in a way that does not collide with this basic .concept

Reply

First: What will they say about the verses showing that Allah's mercy and forgiveness :is all-encompassing? For example

Surely Allah does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, and .(forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases (۴:۴۸

This verse, as explained earlier, covers the cases other than repentance, as the exception of polytheism shows - because in cases of repentance even polytheism .may be forgiven

Second: The promise or message of intercession could incite people to disregard the :rules of the sharī`ah, if it were accompanied by one of the following factors

If it had pin-pointed either the sinner - by name or description - who was to be .۱ forgiven through intercession; or the particular sin that was to be wiped off - .unconditionally, definitely and without any ambiguity

.Or, if intercession were effective against all types of punishment and at all times .۲

Read the following sentences to understand what the above conditions mean: "All men, or a named group of men, will

never be held responsible for any sins they commit; nor will they ever be punished for ”.their transgressions.” “A particularly named sin will never be punished for

Obviously, such declarations would defeat the basic purpose of the sharī`ah. But Allah has kept both things vague. He has never said what sins or which sinners might benefit from intercession, nor has He said whether all or only some of the punishment would be waived; nor has He made it clear whether or not the intercession would be .effective in every condition and at all times

As all these things have been kept vague, no one could be sure of getting the benefit of intercession. In view of this uncertainty, he cannot feel bold to trespass the limits of Allah. On the other hand the possibility of intercession would save him from losing the hope of divine mercy, will keep him away from despair and despondency, from pessi… .mism and hopelessness

:Then there is the verse

If you avoid great sins which you are forbidden, We will expiate from you your (small) .(sins . . . (۴:۳۱

It clearly says that Allah will forgive small sins and waive the punishment, provided the servant shuns great sins. If Allah can say, “If you avoid great-sins, I shall forgive the small ones”, He can as easily say, “If you keep your belief pure until you come to Me with unpolluted faith, I shall accept the intercession of intercessors on your ”.behalf

;The important thing is to keep the faith strong

p: ۳۲۸

the sins weaken the faith, harden the heart and lead to polytheism. Allah has said: But ;(none feels secure from Allah's plan except the people who shall perish (۷:۹۹

;(Nay! rather what they used to do has become like rust upon their hearts (۸۳:۱۴

Then evil was the end of those who did evil, because they rejected the signs of Allah . . .(. (۳۰ :۱۰

The hope of divine mercy (generated by the belief of intercession), in many cases, leads to repentance, piety and good deeds - and often the servant reaches a stage where intercession is not needed after all. It is in fact the most important benefit of .this belief

Likewise, if it were mentioned who would benefit from intercession or which sins were likely to be interceded about, but it was declared that it would nevertheless entail some types of punishment upto a certain period, the man could not feel bold to .commit sins

And the fact is that the Qur'an has nowhere pin-pointed the sin or the sinner likely to benefit from intercession. On the contrary, it speaks only of averting the punishment .from some people. And no objection can be levelled against such a vague expression

Fifth Objection

point

Utmost that reason may prove is the possibility, and not the actuality, of intercession - in fact, it does not prove even that much. So far as the Qur'an is concerned, it does not .show that intercession will actually take place

.Some verses refute the idea of intercession altogether, e.g

the day comes . . .

.(in which there is no bargaining, neither any friendship nor intercession (۲:۲۵۴

,.Other verses say that intercession shall be of no avail, e.g

.(So the intercession of intercessors shall not avail them (۷۴:۴۸

,Still others, after refuting the actuality of intercession, add the proviso like

,(but by His permission (۲:۲۵۵

,(except after His permission(۱۰:۳

. (except for him whom He approves (۲۱:۲۸

This style (a negative followed by exception of divine permission or approval) is used in the Qur'an invariably always to emphasize the negative statement; for example, it :says

;(We will make you recite so you shall not forget, except what Allah pleases (۸۷:۶-۷

Abiding therein so long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord . (pleases (۱۱:۱۰۷

Obviously, there is no definite declaration in the Qur'an proving the actuality of intercession. As for the Tradition, those giving its details are not reliable; and the .reliable ones do not say more than the Qur'an does

Reply

As for the verses refuting the intercession we have already explained that what they reject is the intercession without the permission of Allah. The verse ۷۴:۴۸, which says that "the intercession of intercessors shall not avail them", is not a proof against .intercession; on the contrary it proves its actuality

The verse is in the Chapter, "The Clothed One" and speaks about "them", i.e., a particular group of wrong-doers mentioned in verses ۴۱ to ۴۷; it is they who shall not

benefit from the intercession of intercessors; it does not speak about all the sinners. Moreover, it uses the phrase, "the intercession

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."of intercessors

There is a difference between saying, “Intercession shall not avail them”, and saying, “Intercession of intercessors shall not avail them”. When an infinitive verb or verbal noun is used in genitive or possessive case, it proves its actual existence, as ash-Shaykh `Abdu '۱-Qahir has clearly written in Dala'ilu 'l-ī`jaz.

Therefore, the expression, “intercession of intercessors” proves that some intercession shall definitely take place on that day, although that particular group shall not be able to benefit from it. Also, the plural, “intercessors” points to the presence of a group of intercessors.

:Look for example at the phrases

;(she was of those who remained behind (۷:۸۳

;(and he was one of the unbelievers (۲:۳۴

;(so he is of those who go astray (۷:۱۷۵

.(My covenant does not include the unjust ones (۲:۱۲۴

The plurals in all these phrases would have been irrelevant if they did not mean existence of more than two persons having the attributes mentioned. Likewise, the verse: So the intercession of intercessors shall not avail them, instead of refuting the intercession, clearly proves the existence of intercessors and, therefore, intercession.

As for the verses that contain the exceptions, “but by His permission”, “except after His permission”, they clearly prove the actuality of intercession, especially as the infinitive verb “permission” is used in genitive case (His permission). No one having a taste of Arabic literature can entertain any doubt about it.

It is childish to say that the two phrases, “but by His permission” and “except for him whom He approves” mean the same thing, i.e., the

divine will. Moreover, the Qur'an has used various phrases of exception in various places, e.g., “but by His permission”, “except after His permission”, “except for him .”(whom He approves” and “but he who bears witness of the truth and they know (him

Even if we accept that the divine permission and divine approval mean the same thing, i.e., divine will, can it be said that the last-mentioned phrase (but he who bears witness of the truth . . .) too implies the same? Such interpretation implies such inexactness and laxity in talk as even an ordinary Arab would not like attributed to .him, let alone an eloquent one

Can we accuse the most eloquent divine speech, i.e., the Qur'an, of such inarticulateness? As for the Tradition, we shall show later that they too follow the line .adopted by the Qur'an

Sixth Objection

point

The verses do not say clearly that on the Day of Judgement, the punishment would be averted from the wrong-doers, after the sin has been proved and the sentence pro... nounced. The intercession attributed to the prophets means that they were the intermediaries between the Lord and His servant, they received revelation from their Lord and conveyed it to the people and guided them to the right path, leading them to spiritual and ethical perfection. In this sense, they are the intercessors for the .believers in this world as well as in the hereafter

Reply

No doubt, it is one of the aspects of intercession; but intercession is not limited to this much. The prophets called

their people to the true faith and repentance, and this is the intercession mentioned :by the objector. Now let us look again at the verse

Surely Allah does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, and .(forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases (۴:۴۸

As described earlier, this verse covers the cases other than the true faith and repentance. (True faith and repentance would wipe out the polytheism too.) The ex-ception of polytheism shows that here the talk is about other things - and .intercession, in the meaning explained by us, is one of those cases

Seventh Objection: Reason does not prove that intercession really exists; and the Qur'anic verses on this subject are ambiguous - in one place they prove it, at others refute it; sometimes they add some proviso, at the other they speak unconditionally. Therefore, the ethics of religion demands that we should believe in all of them and .leave their meaning to Allah

Reply: The ambiguous verses, when referred to the decisive ones, become decisive themselves. It is an easy process which is not beyond our ability and power. We shall :explain this subject when writing about the verse

of it there are some verses decisive, they are the basis of the Book, and others are .(ambiguous . . . (۳:۷

?Who will benefit from intercession .۳

As explained earlier, it was not in the best interest of religious guidance to pin-point who should benefit from intercession on the Day of Judgement. But vague hints and ambiguous statements can do no harm, and

.the Qur'an has used them to give us a general idea

:Allah says

Every soul is held in pledge for what it has earned, except the people of the right hand, in gardens; they shall ask each other about the guilty: "What has brought you :into hell?" They shall say

We were not of those who prayed; and we used not to feed the poor; and we used to" enter (into vain discourse) with those who entered (into vain discourse); and we used to call the Day of Judgement a lie, till death overtook us." So the intercession of .(intercessors shall not avail them (۷۴:۳۸-۴۸

The verses declare that every soul shall remain mortgaged on the Day of Judgement for the sins it has earned, held responsible for the wrongs done in this life. The only exception is of the people of the right hand - they shall be released from that pledge, .and shall settle in the gardens

They shall see the wrong-doers who shall be held captive of their sins, and herded into hell; they shall ask them for the reason of their entering into hell, and the guilty shall reply by enumerating four sins as the cause of their disgrace and punishment. And because of those sins, they shall lose the benefit of the intercession of .intercessors

It implies that the people of the right hand would be free from those sins which deprive a man of the benefit of intercession. Allah shall release them from the fetters ;of sins and wrongs

.and this release shall be as a result of the intercession of intercessors

The verses are a part of the Chapter ۷۴, (The Clothed One); it was revealed at Mecca at the beginning of the Call, as its contents amply prove. At that time the prayer and .zakat as known to us were not promulgated

In this context the prayer, mentioned in the verse, "We were not of those who prayed", could only mean turning one's face towards Allah with humility and sub... mission; likewise, the verse, "and we used not to feed the poor", could only refer to translated here as = الخوض) general spending on the poor in the way of Allah. al-Khawd entering into vain discourse) literally means to wade into water, to plunge or rush into .something

The verse, "we used to enter (into vain discourse). . .", implies entanglement in the vain things of this life, which distract a man from remembrance of the hereafter; it .may also mean vilification of the verses which remind one of the Day of Reckoning

:Those wrong-doers, therefore, shall be guilty of four sins

Not turning their faces towards Allah with humility and submission; (۲) not spending (۱) in the way of Allah; (۳) vilification of divine revelations; and (۴) calling the Day of .Judgement a lie

These four evils destroy the foundation of religion. Religion demands following the purified guides, setting one's face towards Allah, turning away from the worldly .distractions, setting one's eyes on the Day of Judgement

If a man succeeds in it, he

p: ۳۳۵

will be free from the third and the fourth sins, i.e., vilification of divine revelation and calling the Day of Judgement a lie. When, in this way, his fundamental belief is .secured, he shall feel the urge to turn towards Allah and to help fellow human beings

These two factors are represented in these verses by prayer and spending in the way of Allah. Faith and deed all would thus combine to build the structure of religion. Other .elements, like belief in Oneness of God and the prophethood, would naturally follow

The people of the right hand are the ones who shall benefit from the intercession; and they are the ones whose religion and faith Allah is pleased with. They may come on the Day of Judgement with perfect deeds - and in that case there will be no need for any intercession; or they may come burdened with some sins - and it is they who shall benefit from the intercession. Therefore, the intercession shall be for those people of .the right hand who may have committed some sins

:Allah says

If you avoid the great sins which you are forbidden, We will expiate from you your .((small) sins (۴:۳۱

Therefore, anybody coming on the Day of Judgement with an unexpiated sin shall certainly be guilty of a great sin - had it been a small one it would have been expiated long ago. We have to conclude from this verse that the intercession shall be for those people of the right hand who

shall be guilty of great sins. The Prophet has said: "Verily my intercession is for those of my ummah who shall have committed great sins; as for the good-doers, there shall ". . . be no difficulty for them

The designation, "the people of the right hand", is the opposite of "the people of the left hand". These Qur'anic terms are based on the fact that man, on the Day of .Judgement, shall be given his book of deeds either in his right hand or in the left

:Allah says

Remember) the day when We will call every people with their Imam; then whoever is) given his book in his right hand, these shall read their book; and they shall not be dealt with a whit unjustly. And whoever is blind in this, he shall (also) be blind in the .(hereafter; and more erring from the way (١٧:٧١-٧٢

We shall describe, when writing about this verse, that getting the book in the right hand is synonymous with following the rightful Imam; likewise getting the book in the :left hand means following a misguiding leader or Imam. Allah says about Pharaoh

He shall lead his people on the resurrection day, and bring them down to the fire .((١١:٩٨

It means that not only the required four qualities but even the nomenclature, "the people of the right hand", is based on the fact that they followed an approved religion, .that Allah was pleased with them

:Allah says in another place

and they do not intercede except for him whom He

.(approves (۲۱:۲۸

This approval is general and without any condition or qualification. It is not like the one :mentioned in verse

except of him whom the Beneficent God allows and whose word He is pleased with . . . ,((۲۰:۱۰۹

where approval or pleasure is related to a servant's word. In the verse under discussion the pleasure or approval is related to them, not to their deed; in other words, “whom He approves” means `whose religion he approves'. Accordingly this .verse too has the same import as the previous ones

:Again Allah says

The day on which We will gather the pious ones to the Beneficent God as the guests of honour, and We will drive the guilty to hell like (thirsty) herd (to the watering place). They shall own not any intercession, save he who has made a covenant with the .(Beneficent God (۱۹:۸۵-۸۷

The one who has made a covenant with Allah shall be given possession of intercession. It should not be forgotten that not every guilty servant is an unbeliever. :Allah says

Whoever comes to his Lord (being) guilty, for him is surely hell; he shall not die therein nor shall he live; and whoever comes to Him a believer (and) he has done good deeds .(indeed, these it is who shall have the high ranks (۲۰:۷۴-۷۵

According to these verses, anyone who is not a good-doing believer is guilty, no matter whether he is an unbeliever or a wrong-doing believer. The latter group, i.e., ,those who have true belief but have also committed sins

is the one that has made a covenant with God. Allah says: Did I not enjoin you (make a ,(covenant with you

O children of Adam! that you should not worship the Satan? Surely he is your open .(enemy, and that you should worship Me; this is the straight path (۳۶:۶۰-۶۱

The phrase, "and that you should worship Me", is a covenant in the meaning of order, enjoinment; and the sentence, "this is the straight path", is also a covenant by implication because the straight path leads to felicity and safety. However, such believers shall enter the hell because of sins they had committed, then they shall be .rescued by intercession

:It is to this covenant that the verse ۲:۸۰ alludes

The Jews) say: "Fire shall not touch us but for a few days." Say: "Have you received a) "?promise (covenant) from Allah

These verses too, therefore, lead us to the same conclusion, namely, the group that shall benefit from intercession on the Day of Judgement is that of the believers who would have committed great sins; it is they whose religion and belief Allah is pleased .with and has approved

?Who are the intercessors .۴

point

It has been described that intercession takes place in two spheres: in creation and in legislation. So far as the intercession in creation is concerned, all intermediary causes .are intercessors because they are placed between the Creator and the created

As for the intercessors in the sphere of legislation and judgement, they may be divided into two categories: (۱) intercessors in this life, and (۲) those

.in the hereafter

Intercessors in This Life

All the things that bring a man nearer to Allah and make him eligible for divine :forgiveness. The following come into this category

:a. Repentance: Allah says

Say: "O my servants! who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah; surely Allah forgives the faults altogether; surely He is .(the Forgiving, the Merciful. And return to your Lord. . . " (۳۹:۵۳ - ۵۴

It covers all the sins, even polytheism; if one repents from it and believes in One God, .one's previous polytheism is wiped out and forgiven

:b. True faith: Allah says

O you who believe! fear Allah and believe in His Apostle: He will give you two portions of His mercy, and make for you a light with which you will walk, and forgive you . . . .((۵۷:۲۸

:c. Good deed

Allah has promised those who believe and do good deeds (that there is) for them ; (pardon and great recompense (۵:۹

.(O you who believe! fear Allah and seek an approach (medium) to Him . . . (۵:۳۵

.There are many verses of this theme

:d. The Qur'an

Indeed has come to you from Allah a light and a manifest Book whereby Allah guides him who follows His pleasure, into the ways of peace, and takes them out from . (darkness towards the light by His will and guides them to the straight path (۵:۱۶

e. Any thing related to a good deed, like the mosques, holy places and auspicious .days

f. The prophets and the apostles, as they

:seek forgiveness for their people. Allah says

and had they, when they were unjust to themselves, come to you and asked forgiveness of Allah, and the Apostle had (also) asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah oft-returning (to mercy), Merciful (۴:۶۴) .

:g. The angels, as they too ask forgiveness for the believers. Allah says

Those who bear the throne and those around it celebrate the praise of their Lord and believe in Him and ask forgiveness for those who believe (۴۰:۷);

and the angels celebrate the praise of their Lord and ask forgiveness for those on . . . earth . . . (۴۲:۵).

h. The believers themselves, as they seek pardon for their believer brothers and for :themselves. Allah quotes them as saying

and pardon us, and forgive us, and have mercy on us, Thou art our Guardian . . . (۲:۲۸۶).

Intercessors in the Hereafter

We use the term, intercessor, in the meaning explained in the beginning. The :following come into this category

:a. The prophets and the apostles: Allah says

And they say: "The Beneficent God has taken to Himself a son." Glory be to Him. Nay! they are honoured servants; they do not precede Him in speech and (only) according to His commandment do they act. He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they do not intercede except for him whom He approves. (۲۱:۲۶-۲۸).

Those who were called 'son' of God, are in fact His honoured servants and they do intercede for him whom He approves. Among them is `Isa, son of

Maryam, and he was a prophet. It means that the prophets do intercede for approved .persons

:Again Allah says

And those whom they call upon besides Him have no authority for (or, do not own) .(intercession, but he who bears witness of the truth and they know (him) (۴۳:۸۶

b. The angels: The preceding two verses prove that the angels too may intercede, :because they too were called daughters of Allah. Moreover, Allah says

And how many an angel is there in the heavens whose intercession does not avail at ;(all except after Allah has given permission to whom He pleases and chooses (۵۳:۲۶

On that day shall no intercession avail except of him whom the Beneficent God allows and whose word He is pleased with. He knows what is before them and what is behind .(them . . . (۲۰:۱۰۹-۱۱۰

:c. The witnesses: Allah says

And those whom they call upon besides Him have no authority for (or, do not own) .(intercession, but he who bears witness of truth and they know (him) (۴۳:۸۶

This verse shows that those who bear witness of the truth do own (or, have authority .for) intercession

The witness mentioned here does not mean the one killed in the battlefield. It refers to the witness for the deeds, as was described in the Chapter of the Opening, and will :be further explained under the verse

And thus we have made you a medium (i.e. just) nation that you may be witnesses over the people and (that) the Apostle may be a witness over you

.(۲:۱۴۳) . . .

d. The believers: They shall be joined to the witnesses on the Day of Judgement; it follows that they too may intercede like the witnesses. Allah says:

And (as for) those who believe in Allah and His apostles, these it is that are the truthful and the witnesses with their Lord . . . (۵۷:۱۹).

۵. Intercession: about what?

The intercession in creation is related to every cause in this world of the cause and effect.

As for the intercession in matters of legislation and judgement, some of them wipe out every sin and its punishment, right from polytheism to the smallest one. For example, repentance done, and true faith acquired, before the Day of Resurrection.

Some wipe out effects of some particular sins, like some specified good deeds. As for the issue under discussion, i.e., the intercession of the prophets and other believers on the Day of Judgement, we have already explained that it shall avail those believers who might have committed big sins, but whose faith Allah is pleased with.

۶. When will intercession be effected?

We are talking here too about the intercession on the Day of Judgement to waive off the punishment of sins. We have earlier quoted the verses of the Chapter ۴۲ (The Clothed One):

Every soul is held in pledge for what it has earned, except the people of the right hand, in gardens they shall ask each other about the guilty (۷۴:۳۸-۴۱).

As explained earlier, the verses clearly say who would benefit from the intercession, and who wont. They also imply that the intercession will

get the wrong-doing believers released from fetters of their sins, and protect them .from abiding for ever in the hell

But there is nothing to show that intercession might avail against the turmoils of the Day of Resurrection. Rather, the verse proves that it will be effective only for rescuing .the guilty believers from the hell, or preventing them from entering into it

It may be inferred from the verses that this talk will take place after the people of the garden have settled in the gardens, and the people of the hell in the hell; and that the intercessors shall then intercede for a group of the guilty ones and rescue them from .the hell

The phrase, "in gardens", implies it, as does the question, "What has brought you into hell?" Both phrases imply a more or less permanent abode. Likewise, the comment, "so the intercession . . . avails them not", denotes something occurring in present time .i.e. after both groups have settled in their abodes

the period between death and the Day of Resurrection) and = (البرزخ) As for al-Barzakh presence of the Prophet and the Imams of the Ahlu '۱-bayt (a.s.) at the time of death and at the questioning in the grave and the help given by them to the believer to :overcome those difficulties (as will be described under the verse

And there shall not be any one of the people of the book but he must certainly believe ,(in him before his death (۴:۱۵۹

these things have nothing to

do with intercession. It is rather exercising the authority given to them by Allah over .the creation

:Allah says

andon the most elevated places there shall be men who know all by their marks, . . . and they shall call out to the dwellers of the garden: "Peace be on you; they shall not . ."have yet entered it, though they hope

And the dwellers of the most elevated places shall call out to men whom they will recognize by their marks, saying: "Of no avail were to you your amassings and your behaving haughtily. Are these they about whom you swore that Allah will not bestow mercy on them?" "Enter the garden; you shall have no fear nor shall you grieve" (۷:۴۶-.(۴۹

It gives a glimpse of the authority or rule vested in them by the permission of Allah. If :we look at the verse ۱۷:۷۱ from this angle, it too throws light on this aspect

Remember) the day when We will call every people with their Imam; then whoever is) . . . given his book in his right hand

The intermediary position of the Imam in calling every people and giving them their .books is a sort of authority and rule vested in him by Allah

To make a long story short, intercession shall happen at the very last stage on the Day of Judgement; it shall bring the divine forgiveness to the guilty believers, prevent them from entering into hell and take those out who would have entered into it; it

shall be by extension of mercy and/or manifestation of benevolence and .magnanimity

Tradition

Al-Husayn ibn Khalid narrates from ar-Rida (a.s.), who narrated through his forefathers from the Leader of the faithful (a.s.) that he said: “The Messenger of Allah :(s.a.w.a.) said

Whoever does not believe in my reservoir, may Allah not bring him to my reservoir,` and whoever does not believe in my intercession, may Allah not extend to him my intercession.' Then he (s.a.w.a.) said: `Verily, my intercession is for those of my ummah who shall have committed great sins; as for the good-doers, there shall be no ”'.difficulty for them

al-Husayn ibn Khalid said: “I asked ar-Rida (a.s.): `O son of the Messenger of Allah! What is then the meaning of the words of Allah, Mighty and Great is He: and they do not intercede except for him whom He approves?' He (a.s.) said: `They do not (intercede except for him whose religion Allah is pleased with.' ”(١

The author says: The tradition of the Prophet, “Verily my intercession is . . .”, has been narrated by both sects with numerous chains; and we have shown earlier that it is .based on the theme of Qur'anic verses

Suma`ah ibn Mihran narrates from Abū Ibrahīm (a.s.) that he said about the words of Allah: may be your Lord will raise you to a praised position: “The people, on the Day of Resurrection, will remain standing for forty years; and the sun will be ordered so that it will ride over their heads and they

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al-Amali, as-Sadūq -١

.will be bridled by sweat - and the earth will be told not to accept any of their sweat

So, they shall approach Adam to intercede for them, and he will direct them to Nūh, and Nūh will direct them to Ibrahīm, and Ibrahīm will direct them to Mūsa, and Mūsa :will direct them to `Isa, and `Isa will direct them saying

You should seek help of Muhammad, the last prophet.' Thereupon, Muhammad` (s.a.w.a.) will say: `I'll do it;' and will proceed until, arriving at the door of the garden, he will knock at it. It will be asked, 'Who is it?' (while Allah knows better!), and he will '.say: 'Muhammad

Then it will be said: 'Open for him.' When the door will be opened he will turn to his Lord, falling in sajdah. He will not raise his head until he is told: 'Speak up and ask, you '.shall be given; and intercede, your intercession shall be granted

He will raise his head and turning to his Lord will fall (again) insajdah. Then he will be promised as before; then he will raise his head. (Thereupon, he shall intercede) until .he will intercede even for him who would have been burnt in the fire

Therefore, on the Day of Resurrection, no one among all the nations will be more eminent than Muhammad (s.a.w.a.); and it is (the meaning of) the words of Allah: May (be your Lord will raise you to a praised position. "(١)

The author says: This meaning is narrated by both sects

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al-`Ayyashi -١

in great number, in detail as well as in short, with numerous chains; and it proves that the "praised position" means the position of intercession. This tradition is not in conflict with intercession of other prophets, because probably their intercession will .be an offshoot of our Prophet's, and it will begin on his hand

Ubayd ibn Zurarah said: "Abu `Abdillah (a.s.) was asked whether a believer would` have the right of intercession. He said: `Yes.' Then someone said: `Will even a :believer need the intercession of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) on that day?' He said

Yes. The believers too will come with wrongs and sins; and there will be none but he` shall need the intercession of Muhammad on that day.' " (`Ubayd) said: "And someone :asked him about the words of the Messenger of Allah

I am the Chief of the children of Adam, and I say this without boasting.' He said: `Yes.'' (Then) he said: `He will hold the chain-link of the door of the garden and open it; then he will fall in sajdah, and Allah will tell him: `Raise your head, do intercede, your '.intercession shall be granted; ask, you shall be given

So he will raise his head and again will fall in sajdah; then Allah will (again) say to him: `Raise your head, do intercede, your intercession shall be granted, and ask, you shall be given.' Thereupon he will raise his head and intercede - and his intercession will be (accepted; and he will ask and be given."(۱

Muhammad ibn

۱- al-`Ayyashi

al-Qasim narrates through his chains from Bishr ibn Shurayh al-Basrī that he said: "I said to Muhammad ibn 'Alf (a.s.): `Which verse in the Book of Allah is the most hope-inspiring?' He said: `And what do your people say (about it)?' I said:

They say, (it is the verse,) Say: "O my servants! who have acted extravagantly` against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. " '

He said: `But we, the people of the house, do not say so.' I said: `Then what do you say about it?' He said: `We say (it is the verse,) And soon will your Lord give you so that you shall be well pleased. (It means) the intercession, by Allah the intercession, (by Allah the intercession.' "(١)

The author says: The words of Allah, may be your Lord will. raise you to a praised position, refers to the Prophet's glorious position of intercession, as the numerous Tradition of the Prophet himself prove.

Moreover, the wording of the verse too supports it: "will raise you" shows that it is a position which he will attain in future, i.e. on the Day of Judgement; "praised" is general and unconditional, and implies that he shall be praised by all men, past and present.

Al-Hamd (الحمد) means to praise someone for a good done to you intentionally. This definition shows that the Prophet will do something by his own will and power which will benefit all of them and in return everyone will praise him. That is why

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١- at-Tafsīr, Furat ibn Ibrahīm

the Imam said in the tradition of `Ubayd ibn Zurarah, "and there will be no one but he ".shall need the intercession of Muhammad on that day

.We shall later explain it further

Now about the declaration that the verse, "and soon will your Lord give you so that you shall be well pleased," is the most hope-inspiring one in the Qur'an - especially ,when compared to the verse

Say: "O my servants! who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah; surely Allah forgives the faults altogether; surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. And return to your Lord and submit to Him before there comes to you the punishment. . . and follow the best that has been revealed to you. . ." .((۳۹:۵۳-۵۵

to lose hope, to despair) has been mentioned several times in the = القنوط) Al-Qunut :Qur'an. Allah quotes Ibrahīm (a.s.) as saying

.(And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord but the erring ones (۱۵:۵۶

:(.Also He quotes Ya'qūb (a.s

.(surely none despairs of Allah's mercy except the unbelieving ones (۱۲:۸۷

But the context in both places shows it as referring to losing hope of divine mercy in matters of creation. As for the verse under discussion the context slows that it admonishes against losing hope of divine mercy in matters of legislation and judgement; look for instance at the words, who have acted extravagantly against .their own souls

They clearly say that one who has committed sins should not despair of the mercy of

Allah. Also Allah has promised forgiveness for the faults altogether without any exception. But this promise is followed by admonition to repent (turn to your Lord) and .submit to Allah and follow the divine commandments

The text on the whole demonstrates that a man who might have committed sins need not despair of the mercy of Allah as long as he is in a position to turn to Allah, to submit .to Him, and to follow His commandments

In short, this mercy is conditional. And there is a vast difference between this conditional mercy and the all-encompassing, unconditional mercy and unrestricted granting and pleasing which Allah has promised His Apostle, who himself was a mercy .for all the mankind

It is that promise which will make the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.a.) well pleased: and soon .will your Lord give you, so that you shall be well pleased

This last-mentioned verse occurs in a context where Allah mentions His grace and bounties to the Prophet; it is a unique promise never made to anyone else. The phrase, "will give you," is unconditional and unrestricted. A promise, somewhat similar, :has been made to a group of the people of the garden

;(they shall have what they please with their Lord (۴۲:۲۲

.(They have therein what they wish and with Us is more yet (۵۰:۳۵

These verses show that those people shall be given more than they wish for -and man by nature desires all that he can think of happiness, good and felicity. It means that they shall be

:given more than they can think of, as Allah says

.(So no soul knows what is hidden for them of the joy of the eyes (۳۲:۱۷

Now this is what Allah has promised those who believe and do good; and even this is beyond human imagination. Surely, what He shall give to His Prophet as His special .grace, must be far greater than this

This much about the grace of Allah. Now let us reflect upon “you shall be well pleased”. Obviously this pleasure has no relation whatsoever to the pleasure a man should have for whatever Allah gives Him and decrees for him. Allah is the Master and the .servant has nothing of his own except the inherent need and poverty

He must always be happy and grateful for whatever his Master gives him, no matter whether it is more or less, big or small; he must always be pleased with whatever .Allah decrees for him, whether it looks comforting or distressing

This is what is expected of every good believer; surely the Prophet knows this ideal better, and acts upon it more perfectly, than anyone else; in short, he likes for himself .only that which Allah wills for him

Therefore, it would have been superfluous and irrelevant to say that he would be pleased after he was given something. It follows that this promised pleasure refers to something else. It refers to that happiness or satisfaction which a needy person .experiences when his need is fully met

A similar promise was given to some of

:His virtuous servants

As for) those who believe and do good, surely they are the best of men. Their reward) with their Lord is gardens of perpetuity beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein for ever; Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him; that is for .(him who fears his Lord (۹۸:۷-۸

Its context shows that this too is to show some special divine favour for them, and hence it must be a very exclusive and comprehensive pleasure. At this juncture, it :should be mentioned that Allah has praised His Apostle in these words

.(to the believers (he is) compassionate, merciful (۹:۱۲۸

:Keeping all these things in view, ponder on this question

Can the Prophet be pleased to enjoy the bounties of the garden, or can he be happy with the pleasures of the paradise, when some believers are imprisoned inside the ?hell

Remember that they are the people who believed in Allah as the One God, in the Prophet as the true prophet, and in what he brought with him as the true revelation; but they were overcome by their indiscretion and Satan twisted them between his fingers as a toy, and so they committed errors and sins - without any thought of .revolting against God, of any arrogance before Him

Even we, when we remember what mistakes we committed in past, what chances of spiritual perfection we missed before, we start blaming ourselves for all the shortcomings; then if we see some inexperienced youth indulging in youthful frolics, we are

.reluctant to condemn them; we feel compassion for them

But this mercy of ours is a manifestation of the imperfect compassion put in our nature by the Creator. How can we understand the mercy of the Lord of the worlds, in a place where the magnanimity of the compassionate, merciful Prophet and the mercy of the Most Merciful of all have to decide about the indiscretions of a powerless human being? Especially so when he had undergone all the torments of al-barzakh in ?proportion to his misdeeds

:al-Qummī narrates a tradition in his at-Tafsīr, under the verse

,(And intercession will not avail aught with Him save of him whom He permits (۳۴:۲۳

that Abu '۱-`Abbas al-Mukabbar said: "A servant of a wife of `Alī ibn al-Husayn (a.s.), :named Abū Ayman, came (to the fifth Imam - a.s.) and said

O Abū Ja'far! You mislead the people, saying, intercession of Muhammad, in...` tercession of Muhammad.' (Hearing this) Abu Ja'far became so angry that his face :took a glowering expression; then he said

Woe unto you! O Abū Ayman! Are you deluded by chastity of your stomach and` genitals? Why, when you will see the terrors of the resurrection, you shall certainly be !in need of intercession of Muhammad. Fie on you

Would he intercede except for him who would have been sentenced to the fire?' (Then) he said: 'There is no one from the early people to the later ones but he will '.need the intercession of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) on the Day of Resurrection

Then again Abū Ja'far said: 'Certainly

the Messenger of Allah has (authority of) intercession for his ummah, and we have (authority of) intercession for our Shī'ahs, and our Shī'ahs have (authority of) intercession for their families.'

Then he said: 'And surely a believer shall intercede for (very large number of) people like the (tribes of) Rabī'ah and Mudar. And surely a believer shall intercede for his servant, saying: “O my Lord! I owe this to him, he was protecting me from heat and cold.” ' ”

The author says: This tradition refers to a general intercession (“There is no one from the early people to the later ones but he will need the intercession of Muhammad . . .”) and a particular one (“Fie on you! Would he intercede except for him who would have been sentenced to the fire?”).

We find similar idea in al-`Ayyashī's tradition from `Ubayd ibn Zurarah mentioned earlier. There are other Tradition of the same theme narrated by both sects. It is supported also by the verse:

And those whom they call upon besides Him have no authority for intercession, but he who bears witness of the truth and they know (him) (۴۳:۸۶).

This verse shows that the prerequisite of intercession is the witnessing of the truth. The witnesses are the intercessors, the owners of the intercession. And we shall describe under verse ۲:۱۴۳

(And thus We have made you a medium [just] nation that you may be witnesses over the people and [that] the Apostle may be a witness over you),

that the prophets are the witnesses

and that Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) is the witness over them; so he (s.a.w.a.) is the witness over the witnesses, and thus he is the intercessor for the intercessors; and without the testimony of the witnesses the foundation of the Day of Judgement would .crumble

The (fifth) Imam said about the verse, And intercession will not avail aught with Him :save him whom He permits

No prophet or apostle may intercede until Allah permits him, except the Apostle of" Allah, because Allah has already given him permission before the Day of Resurrection; and intercession is (allowed) to him and to the Imams from his progeny, (and after that to the prophets." (at-Tafsir, al-Qummi

Alī (a. s.) said: "The Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.a.) said: `Three (groups) shall intercede` with Allah and their intercession will be accepted: The prophets, then the (religious) (scholars, then the martyrs.' "(١

in the Qur'anic terminology means witnesses (الشهَداء) 'The author says: ash-Shuhada of the deeds; but in the Tradition of the Imams it is generally used for the martyrs who are killed in the way of Allah. And apparently it is in this meaning that the word .has been used in this tradition

The Imam said: "We have the (authority of) intercession; and the people who love us (have the (authority of) intercession."(٢

The author says: Numerous Tradition prove that the Lady of paradise, Fatimah (a.s.) has the power and authority of intercession, as do his descendants other than the Imams. Likewise, a lot of Tradition bestow similar authority on the believers - even

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al-Khisal -١

al-Khisal -٢

.to their miscarried foetus

There is a well-known tradition that the Prophet said: “Marry (and) procreate; for I shall boast of you (i.e. your number) against other nations on the Day of Resurrection - even of miscarried foetus; he shall stand at the door of the garden in a restive ” '. . . mood; he shall be told to enter, but he will say: 'No, until my parents enter it

Abū `Abdillah narrates, through his father and grandfather, from 'Ali (a.s.) that he said: “The garden has eight gates: one for the entry of prophets and the truthful ones, the other for the martyrs and the good ones; and five gates are for the entry of our the path; the bridge = الصراط) Shī'ahs and lovers - I shall be standing on theas-Sirat :over the hell) praying and saying

My Lord! Save my Shī`ahs and my lovers and my helpers and those who followed me` in the (life of the) world.' Then all of a sudden there will come a voice from inside the :throne: `Your prayer is granted and your intercession for your Shī`ahs accepted

And every Shī`ah of mine and everyone who loves me, helps me and fights my' enemies by (his) deed or word, shall intercede for seventy thousand of his neighbours and relatives - and (there is) a gate from which shall enter all the Muslims who witness that there is no god except Allah and in whose heart there is not an iota of enmity towards us, the

(people of the house."(1)

Hafs al-Mu'adhdhin narrates that Abū `Abdillah (a.s.) wrote, inter alia, in a letter to his companions: "And know that none of the creatures of Allah shall avail you against Him, neither an angel who is near to Him, nor an apostle prophet nor any one below them. Whoever likes intercession of intercessors to avail him, should ask Allah to be pleased (with him."(2)

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "Jabir told Abū Ja'far (a.s.): 'May I be your ransom, O son of the Apostle of Allah! Narrate to me a tradition about your grandmother, Fatimah.' (Then the tradition continues, mentioning the intercession of Fatimah on the Day of :Resurrection, until it says:) Abū Ja'far (a.s.) said

Then, by God, no one among the people will remain (unsaved) except a doubting one' or an unbeliever or a hypocrite. When they shall be (put) into (various) ranks of the :hell, they shall cry out - as Allah has said

So we have no intercessors, nor a true friend: But if we could but once return, we '. (would be of the believers (26:100-102

Then Abu Ja'far (a.s.) said: `But oh! how preposterous! They shall be denied what they ;asked for

and if they were ,sent back they would certainly return to what they were forbidden, (and most certainly they are liars (6:28) .' "(3)

The author says: The Imam has proved by the sentence, "So we have no intercessors", that intercession will take place on the Day of Judgement. In this light, it is amusing to

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1- al-Khisal

2- al-Kafī

3- at-Tafsīr, Furat ibn Ibrahīm

see our adversaries trying to use it as an argument against intercession! Just as we said about the verse:

(So the intercession of intercessors avails them not (۷۴:۴۸),

this verse too shows that intercession will surely take place on that day.

If the Qur'an wanted to negate the intercession altogether, it would have used the singular form (. . . no intercessor nor a true friend). But it has used the plural, "So we have no intercessors"; and it proves that there shall be a group interceding on behalf of some people, but it will not be of any avail to those particular speakers.

Moreover, the following sentence, "But if we could but once return, we would be of the believers," shows a desire within the frame of grief. Obviously such a desire is related to that thing loss of which has caused the grief.

Therefore, what this sentence implies is this: Would that we could return to the previous life; then we would be of the believers, so that the intercession of intercessors would avail us too, as it has benefited the believers. The verse, therefore, is a good proof for intercession.

Al-Kazim (a.s.) narrated from his father, through his forefathers, from the Prophet that he said: "My intercession is for those of my ummah who would have committed big sins; as for the doers of good, there shall be no difficulty for them."

He was asked: "O son of the Messenger of Allah! How can the intercession be for those who would have committed big

,sins, while Allah says

;(and they do not intercede except for him whom He approves (۲۱:۲۸

"?and a committer of big sins cannot be approved

He (a.s.) said: "No believer commits a sin but he regrets it and feels ashamed. And the Prophet has said: 'Enough is regret as repentance.' And also he (s.a.w.a.) has said: '.'Whoever is pleased by a good deed and displeased by a bad deed, he is a believer

Therefore, if there is someone who does not feel remorse for a sin he has committed, he is not a believer, and intercession will not avail him, and he will be an unjust one. :And Allah says

the unjust shall not have any true friend nor any intercessor who should be obeyed ".((۴۰:۱۸

It was said to him: "O son of the Messenger of Allah! How is it that he who is not sorry of a sin he has committed, he does not remain a believer?" He said: "Anyone who commits a big sin, knowing that he must be punished for it, will certainly feel remorse for what he has done. And as soon as he is sorry, he is repentant, eligible for .intercession

But if he is not sorry, then he is persisting in it, and a persistent (sinner) is not forgiven, because he does not believe in the punishment of what he has done; had he believed :in that punishment, he would have been sorry. And the Prophet has said

No big sin abides with apologizing, and no small sin remains (small) with`

persistence.' And as for the words of Allah, and they do not intercede except for him whom He approves, it means that they do not intercede except for him whose religion .He approves

Religion is an acknowledgement that good and bad deeds have to be recompensed. If one's religion were approved, one would feel remorse for the sins one would have committed, because he would know what their result would be on the (day of) resur-(rection."(١

The author says: The words of the Imam, "and he will be an unjust one": It gives the definition of "unjust" as applicable on the Day of Resurrection. It alludes to the ,Qur'anic verse

Then a crier will cry out among them that the curse of Allah is on the unjust, who hinder (people) from Allah's way and seek to make it crooked and they are .(disbelievers in the hereafter (٧:۴۴-۴۵

Accordingly, unjust is he who does not believe in the Day of Judgement; naturally, such a man would not be sorry if he neglected to do what he was ordered to do, or if .he indulged in sins and crimes

May be, he outright rejects basic truths and teachings of religion; or may be he just does not care, is not worried of punishment of sins on the Day of Reckoning. In later case, his verbal acknowledgement of the Day of Judgement would be but a joke and .mockery

as soon as he is sorry, he is repentant, eligible for intercession": The adjective, . . ." repentant, is not

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at-Tawhīd -١

used here in its well-known terminological sense - repentance (in the terminological sense) is by itself the best intercessor and saviour.

What the Imam meant here is this: If he feels remorse for the sin committed, he returns to Allah, his religion is thus approved by Him, and therefore he becomes eligible for intercession.

"And the Prophet has said: `No big sin abides with apologizing . . .'": The Imam narrated this tradition to prove that persistence in a sin (even a small one) changes it from its original smallness to a far greater transgression - it shows one's disbelief in the Day of Judgement and injustice towards the signs of Allah. And such a thing is not forgiven.

A sin is forgiven if the sinner sincerely repents, or if intercession avails him - and this depends on his religion being approved; and both repentance and approved religion are absent in case of persistence.

A similar theme is found in a tradition quoted in `Ilalulu 'shshara'i' from Abū Ishaq al-Laythī that he said: "I said to Abū Ja'far Muhammad ibn `Alī al-Baqir (a.s.): 'O son of the Messenger of Allah! Tell me about a believer, possessing religious understanding when he reaches (a high point in) knowledge and becomes perfect, does he commit fornication?' He said: 'By God! No.' I said: 'Then does he indulge in sodomy?'

He said: 'By God! No.' I said: 'Then does he steal?' He said: 'No.' I said: `Then does he drink intoxicant?' He said: 'No.' I said: `Then does he

:commit any of the big sins or indulge in any of these indecencies?' He said

No.' I said: 'Then does he commit a sin?' He said: 'Yes, and he is a believer, sinner,' submissive.' I said: `What does submissive mean?' He said: `The submissive (servant) " '. . . does not persist in it, does not keep doing it

ar-Rīda (a.s.) narrated through his forefathers that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) said: "When the resurrection comes, Allah, Great and Mighty is He, will manifest Himself to His believing servant, and will remind him of his sins one by one; then Allah will forgive him; Allah will not let (even) a near angel or an apostle prophet know of his (sins), and will cover it lest anyone becomes aware of it. Then He will say to his bad (deeds: 'Be good deeds.' " (۱)

Abu Dharr said: "The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) said: 'A man will be brought on the Day of Resurrection; and it will be said: "Show him his small sins; and keep back from :him his big sins." Then it will be said to him

You did so and so on such and such a day." And he will go on confessing, while" apprehensive of his big sins. Then it will be said: "Give him a good deed in place of every bad deed." Then he will say: "I had done some sins which I do not see (mentioned) here."' " Abu Dharr said: "And I saw the Messenger of Allah laughing

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۱- al-Khisal

(until his teeth were shown."(1)

As-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "When the Day of Resurrection comes, Allah, Glorified and (Sublime is He, shall spread His mercy until even Iblīs will hope for His mercy."(2)

The author says: The last three Tradition are of general nature. The Tradition about intercession of the Prophet, emanating from the Imams of Ahlu '1-bayt as well as from the Sunni sources have successively been narrated by so many narrators as to .leave no room for any doubt about their authenticity

Altogether they prove that intercession will take place, and that it will avail the believers who might have committed sins; it will prevent them from entering into hell, or will rescue them from it if already sent therein. It is however certain that the sinning believers shall not be allowed to abide for ever in the hell. And we have earlier .explained that the Qur'an too does not say more than this

A Philosophical Contemplation

According to Abū `Alī Ibn Sina, intellectual reasoning cannot give us details concerning the resurrection and judgement (as given in the Qur'an and sunnah), as it lacks the premises necessary to lead to a conclusion. Nevertheless, it may contemplate the future of man after the soul leaves the body and lives in the form of (Platonic) ideas - how it proceeds on the path of happiness or unhappiness reaching the ultimate .station

Whatever man does in beginning leaves an imprint on his psyche - either of happiness or unhappiness. By "happiness" we mean what is good for him as

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1- Muslim

2- al-Amalī, as-Sadūq

a man; on the other hand, “unhappiness” denotes what is bad for him as a man. If the action is repeatedly performed the imprint becomes deeper and deeper until it .becomes a deep-rooted characteristic, until it reshapes the psyche in its own mould

If the mould is good, the resulting shape as well as the actions emanating from it are good and agreeable to the man “as a man”, and man is “happy”. If on the contrary the mould is bad, the resulting shape and actions become ugly and disagreeable to the man “as a man”; and although the deformed psyche seemingly enjoys those actions, .”in reality it remains unhappy “as a man

Here we are talking about a man who is happy in his psyche and good in his deed vis-.a-vis a man who is unhappy in his psyche and evil in his deeds

It is the former that is the subject of our discussion here. A man may be good and happy in his person, because he has got correct belief of eternal truth; but his psyche has been polluted by the sins and transgressions committed as a result of weakness of flesh and error of judgement and choice. Consequently, psyche becomes .”“unhappy

But this pollution and unhappiness is a matter of constraint that has been forced on his inherently happy psyche; and we know from intellectual reasoning that constraint .does not continue for ever

That soul will most certainly get rid of that unhappiness, pollution and rust in the fire of chastisement

in al-Barzakh or on the Day of Judgement - it depends on its own strength and stage .of inner perfection

The opposite is true for the later group. Whatever the effects of good deeds, they are no more than cosmetics; it is a forced appearance not agreeable to its inner-self; and .sooner or later it is bound to disappear

There remains a fifth category: The soul which could not turn its potentials into achievements - good or bad - in this life. They will remain in suspense, waiting for the .divine judgement

This much could be discerned from intellectual reasoning, concerning the reward and .punishment, the inseparable results of the deeds

Reasons also prove that existence has various grades of perfection - ideally perfect or less so, stronger or weaker. Consequently, the souls have various ranks in relation .to the Creator - nearer to, or further from him

They are therefore one above the other, the highest being the nearest to the First Cause. They are the most perfect and ideal souls, like those of the prophets (may peace of Allah be on them!). They may become the mediums through which the unnatural pollution and rust may be removed from the weaker souls which are further .below. It is this role which we call intercession

A Social Discourse

Some people say: "Human society cannot continue without some laid rules, nor without an authority to look after its affairs. When all members maintain discipline and .obey the rules, social justice is maintained and strengthened

This system is based on temporal benefits

which the society cannot do without, as well as on spiritual and ethical ideals, like truth, sincerity, keeping one's word etc. which the development and good of the .society depend upon

For these rules and regulations to have any force and effect, it was necessary for them to be accompanied by punishment laid down for the transgressors. Only in this way the system could be protected against the willful transgression of some and .indifference and negligence of others

That is why when a government (no matter which ideology it follows) is strong and capable enough to make people obey its edicts, the country marches forward, and society proceeds on the path of development. On the contrary when it is weak, the country is overcome by lawlessness and disorder, and plagued by troubles and .turmoil

In view of the above, it is essential for the good of society to make people believe" that they could not escape the consequences if they transgressed the law. Nothing should be said or done to raise a hope in them that they could avoid the punishment .by some means, like intercession, bribe or deception

The biggest objection against Christianity is aimed at its belief of atonement: That" Christ was crucified in order to atone for the sins of his followers. Now the Christians rely on that atonement to get salvation in the next world, without caring what they do .in this life

Religion, in this way, destroys the very foundation of society, retards civilization and pulls it backwards. Data show

that lie and injustice is found in ardent followers of religion to a far greater extent than in those who do not follow any religion. Its only reason is that the former are confident that their sins would certainly be wiped off through intercession."

This is in short what some "scholars" hold against the belief of intercession: That it weakens the foundation of civilization and social justice. But neither Islam proves intercession, in the meaning they have given it, nor the intercession which Islam speaks of gives the result they have claimed.

Before writing against intercession, as taught by Islam, they should learn what Islam teaches, how it applies its laws to the society, what type of intercession it promises and how, when and to what extent it is to be applied and effected:

First: What the Qur'an confirms of the intercession is this: The believers shall not abide in the hell, on the Day of Resurrection, provided they come to their Lord with approved belief and true faith. Thus, it is a conditional promise. Then it has emphasized that the faith remains in grave danger from sins, especially the big ones, and more particularly if one persists in them.

Such a believer would be tottering on the brink of eternal damnation. When a believer remembers that promise, his hope of deliverance soars high; when he needs this warning, he is overcome by dread of perdition.

His soul remains hovering between hope and fear; he worships his Lord both with love and awe. Thus, he

spends his life in a moderate way, on the middle course. He experiences neither .discouragement of pessimism, nor the rashness of over-optimism

Second: Islam has made comprehensive laws for temporal and spiritual upliftment of the society; these laws cover all aspects of life of an individual and a group. It has prescribed suitable punishments for those who violate any of those rules - from monetary compensation to chastisement to firmly fixed punishment - until a stage comes when the offender is deprived of his rights as a member of society and is .condemned to eternal shame, or even death

All this system has been entrusted into the hands of divinely appointed ulu 'l-amr (اولو الأمر = people vested with authority). Then each Muslim has been made responsible, for all other Muslims, as he is obliged to enjoin his compatriots, to do good and desist .from evil

To cap it all, the Muslim nation is obliged to call others to the right path, and the way to affect this call is to give them good news of eternal reward if they do good and to .warn them of eternal perdition if they indulge in evil

It is this knowledge of this and the next world which is the foundation of Islam's character-building. The Prophet promulgated this system; and experiment has proved its effectiveness and potency. Its power to mould the society into divine image was proved during the time of the Prophet and continued to do so until Umayyids .came into power

They made theshari`ah a

toy to play with; put the Islam's penal code in cold storage and behaved as though they were above all law, as if nothing could hinder them in their pursuit of pleasure. The result of that exercise is before our eyes today. The standard of “freedom” has been raised; western civilization is making inroads in our society. In Islamic countries, .Islam exists in name only

It is this manifest weakening of religion and this retrogressive movement of the Muslims which has caused their fall from heights of justice and virtue, and made them slip down the plane of morality and ethics. It is their debauchery and their wallowing in their base desires and sensualities that has made them bold to transgress every limit, to violate every rule, so much so that even the atheists look down at their .debauchery, dishonesty and immorality

This is the real and only cause of the deterioration of Muslim society. The objector is completely off the mark when he attributes this state of affairs to those sublime religious realities whose only aim, and only effect, was and is the man's felicity and .happiness in this world as well as in the hereafter

The data, mentioned in his argument, are irrelevant here. They have looked at a Muslim society which has got no guardian and no authority to enforce Islamic laws within its jurisdiction, and at an atheist society which has a strong authority to enforce its laws and to keep the people within the limits, with help of

education and training of its own choice. Therefore, this comparison is quite clearly .unjustified

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۴۹-۶۱

point

(۴۹) وَإِذْ نَجَّيْنَاكُم مِّنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوَءَ الْعَذَابِ يُذَبِّحُونَ أَبْنَاءكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءكُمْ وَفِي ذَلِكُم بَلاء مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ

(۵۰) وَإِذْ فَرَقْنَا بِكُمُ الْبَحْرَ فَأَنجَيْنَاكُمْ وَأَغْرَقْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَأَنتُمْ تَنظُرُونَ

(۵۱) وَإِذْ وَاعَدْنَا مُوسَى أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِن بَعْدِهِ وَأَنتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ

(۵۲) ثُمَّ عَفَوْنَا عَنكُم مِّن بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

(۵۳) وَإِذْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَالْفُرْقَانَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

(۵۴) وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ إِنَّكُمْ ظَلَمْتُمْ أَنفُسَكُمْ بِاتِّخَاذِكُمُ الْعِجْلَ فَتُوبُواْ إِلَى بَارِئِكُمْ فَاقْتُلُواْ أَنفُسَكُمْ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ عِندَ بَارِئِكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

(۵۵) وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَا مُوسَى لَن نُّؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّى نَرَى اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْكُمُ الصَّاعِقَةُ وَأَنتُمْ تَنظُرُونَ

(۵۶) ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاكُم مِّن بَعْدِ مَوْتِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

(۵۷) وَظَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْغَمَامَ وَأَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَّ وَالسَّلْوَى كُلُواْ مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَمَا ظَلَمُونَا وَلَـكِن كَانُواْ أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

(۵۸) وَإِذْ قُلْنَا ادْخُلُواْ هَـذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ فَكُلُواْ مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ رَغَداً وَادْخُلُواْ الْبَابَ سُجَّداً وَقُولُواْ حِطَّةٌ نَّغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطَايَاكُمْ وَسَنَزِيدُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

(۵۹) فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُواْ قَوْلاً غَيْرَ الَّذِي قِيلَ لَهُمْ فَأَنزَلْنَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُواْ رِجْزاً مِّنَ السَّمَاء بِمَا كَانُواْ يَفْسُقُونَ

(۶۰) وَإِذِ اسْتَسْقَى مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ فَقُلْنَا اضْرِب بِّعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ فَانفَجَرَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْناً قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أُنَاسٍ مَّشْرَبَهُمْ كُلُواْ وَاشْرَبُواْ مِن رِّزْقِ اللَّهِ وَلاَ تَعْثَوْاْ فِي الأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ

(۶۱) وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَا مُوسَى لَن نَّصْبِرَ عَلَىَ طَعَامٍ وَاحِدٍ فَادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُخْرِجْ لَنَا مِمَّا تُنبِتُ الأَرْضُ مِن بَقْلِهَا وَقِثَّآئِهَا وَفُومِهَا وَعَدَسِهَا وَبَصَلِهَا قَالَ أَتَسْتَبْدِلُونَ الَّذِي هُوَ أَدْنَى بِالَّذِي هُوَ خَيْرٌ اهْبِطُواْ مِصْراً فَإِنَّ لَكُم مَّا سَأَلْتُمْ وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذِّلَّةُ وَالْمَسْكَنَةُ وَبَآؤُوْاْ بِغَضَبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ

بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُواْ يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّينَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَواْ وَّكَانُواْ يَعْتَدُونَ

And when We delivered you from Pharaoh's people, who subjected you to severe torment, killing your sons and sparing your women, and in this there was a great trial .(from your Lord (۴۹

And when We parted the sea for you, so We saved you and drowned the followers of .(Pharaoh while you watched by (۵۰

And when We appointed (a time of) forty nights with Mūsa, then you took the calf (for ; (a god) after him and you were unjust (۵۱

.(then We pardoned you after that so that you might give thanks (۵۲

.(And when We gave Mūsa the book and the distinction that you might walk aright (۵۳

And when Mūsa said to his people: "O my people! you have surely been unjust to yourselves by taking the calf (for a god), therefore turn to your Creator (penitently) and kill your people, that is best for you with your Creator; so He turned to you .((mercifully),for surely He is the Oftreturning (with mercy), the Merciful" (۵۴

And when you said: "O Mūsa! we will not believe in you until we see Allah manifestly, " ;(so the punishment overtook you while you looked on (۵۵

.(then We raised you up after your death that you may give thanks (۵۶

And We made the clouds to give shade over you and We sent to you manna and quails: Eat of good things that We have given you; and they did not do Us

.(any harm, but they did harm their own selves (۵۷

And when We said: “Enter this city, then eat from it a plenteous (food)wherever you wish, and enter the gate making obeisance, and say, forgiveness, We will forgive you .(your wrongs and give more to those who do good (to others) (۵۸

But those who were unjust changed it for a saying other than that which had been spoken to them, so We sent upon those who were unjust a pestilence from heaven, .(because they transgressed (۵۹

And when Mūsa prayed for drink for his people, We said: “Strike the rock with your staff.” So there gushed from it twelve springs; each tribe knew its drinking place: “Eat and drink of the provisions of Allah and do not act corruptly in the land, making mis-.(chief” (۶۰

And when you said: “O Mūsa! we cannot bear with one food, therefore pray to your Lord on our behalf to bring forth for us out of what the earth grows, of its herbs and its cucumbers and its garlic and its lentils and its onions. He said: “Will you exchange that which is better for that which is worse? Enter a city, so you will have what you ask for. ” And abasement and humiliation were brought down upon them and they returned with Allah's wrath; this was so because they disbelieved in the signs of Allah and killed the prophets unjustly; this was so because they disobeyed and exceeded .(the limits (۶۱

Commentary

:Qur’an: and sparing your women

They left your women alive in order that they (i.e. the women) might serve them. "al-Istihya '" (الاستحیآء): means to wish someone to remain alive. The word may also mean: They behaved indecently with the women until they (i.e. the women) lost their modesty.

"Yasūmūnakum" (یسومونکم) translated here as "they subjected you to", literally means, they imposed upon you.

Qur'an: And when We parted the sea for you: al-Farq (الفرْق) is opposite of al-jam' (الجَمْع); the words mean to separate and to gather, respectively. The same is the case of al-fasl (الفَصْل) vis-a-vis "al-wasl" (الوَصْل). To separate the sea means to part its water. "Bikum" (بِکُم), translated here as "for you", may also mean, "Soon on your entering the sea."

Qur'an: And when We appointed (a time of) forty days with Mūsa: The same event has been described in Chapter ۷ in these words:

And We appointed with Mūsa a time of thirty nights and completed them with ten (more), so the appointed time of his Lord was complete, forty nights (۷:۱۴۲).

This verse mentions the total duration of the two promises together, as a tradition says.

Qur'an: therefore turn to your Creator (penitently): al-Bari' (البــاریء) is one of the beautiful names of Allah, as Allah says:

He is Allah, the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner; His are the most beautiful names. . . (۵۹:۲۴).

This name has been used three times in the Qur'an: twice in the verse under discussion and once in Chapter ۵۹, quoted just above. Perhaps Allah used this name here because it was most suitable

.in the context of the event described

the = الموجِد) the Creator) and al-Mūjid = الخالق) While it is nearer in meaning to al-Khaliq he separated, he = بَرَءَ يَــبْرَءُ بَرَءً) Inventor), it is derived from bara'a, yabra'u, bar'an .(separates, to separate

Allah thus separates His creation from inexistence, or He separates man from the earth. This name in this context conveys the following idea: No doubt it is very hard to repent by killing your own people. But Allah, Who now orders you to destroy yourselves by killing, is the same God who had created you. He was pleased to create you when it was good for you; and now He has decreed that you should kill your own .people, and this order too is good for you

How can He decide anything for you except that which is good, and He is your Maker and Creator. The phrase, "your Creator", points to a special relation which they have with Him, and it emphasizes the fact that the given command is not for revenge; it is .based on divine love, in order to purify them

Qur'an: that is best for you with your Creator: This and the preceding verses (that enumerate their transgressions and sins) are addressed to the whole Jewish nation, although the sins were committed by only some groups of them and not by all. Obviously it is because they were very much united as a nation; if one did a thing, .others were pleased with it

It was because of this

feeling of their national unity that one group's action is attributed to the whole nation. Otherwise, not all the Israelites had killed the prophets, nor had all of them indulged in .the calf-worship, or committed other sins mentioned herein

It proves that the order, "kill your people", actually meant, kill some of your people, i.e., the calf-worshippers. It may also be inferred from the words, "you have surely been unjust to yourselves by taking the calf for worship", and the words, "that is best .(for you with your Creator" (which apparently is the final part of the speech of Mūsa

The words, "so He turned to you (mercifully)", prove that their repentance was accepted. Tradition says that their repentance was accepted and sin forgiven when .only a few of them had been killed

This forgiveness before the order was fully complied with shows that the command was given as a trial. The case is somewhat similar to the dream of Ibrahīm (a.s.) and his being told to sacrifice Isma'īl; before he could reach the ultimate stage, he was ,told

.(O Ibrahīm! You have indeed made the vision come true (۳۷:۱۰۴-۱۰۵

Likewise, Mūsa (a.s.) told his people "turn to your Creator (penitently) and kill your people, that is best for you with your Creator", and Allah confirmed the order, yet He took the killing of some as equal to the execution of all, and informed them that their ."(repentance was accepted, "so He turned to you (mercifully

.(punishment = الرجز) "Qur'an: a pestilence from heaven: "ar-Rijz

:Qur'an

(العيث، is derived fromal-`ayth and al-`athy (لا تعثَوا) "do not act corruptly: "La ta'thaw .it means the biggest chaos and mischief (العَثى

is (الفوم "is cucumber; "al-fum (الخِيار) "Qur'an: and its cucumbers and its garlic: "al-Khiyar .garlic or wheat

.(they returned = باءوا) "Qur'an: and they returned with Allah's wrath: "Ba'ū

Qur'an: this was so because they disbelieved: It gives the reason of preceding statement; and the next sentence, "this was so because they disobeyed and exceeded the limits" is the reason of that reason. Their disobedience and perennial excesses caused them to reject the signs of Allah and kill the prophets. Allah says in :another verse

Then evil was the end of those who did evil, because they rejected the signs of Allah .(and used to mock them (٣٠:١٠

How was the disbelief caused by disobedience? One of the coming Tradition explains .it

Tradition

Abū Ja'far (a.s.) said about the words of Allah: and when We appointed (a time of) forty nights with Mūsa: "It was thirty nights in the (divine) knowledge and measure, then something else happened (to show that it was not the final decree) and Allah added ten more; and in this way the appointed time of his Lord, the first and the last, (was completed forty days."(١

The author says: This tradition supports what we have mentioned earlier that the .forty was the total of the two appointed times

Alī (a.s.) said about the words of Allah: and when Mūsa said to his people: "٠ my` .people! you have surely been unjust to yourselves

al-`Ayyashī -١

They asked Mūsa: `How should we repent?' He said: `Some of you should kill the" :" . . '.others

Thereupon, they took the knives and everyone started killing (the others), even his brother, father and son, without caring, by God! whom he killed. (It continued) till seventy thousand of them were killed. Then Allah revealed to Mūsa: `Tell them to stay their hands;' and he who was killed was forgiven and he who remained, his (repentance was accepted. "(١

The Imam said: "Mūsa (a.s.) went to the appointed place and time, and then came back to his people; and they had started worshipping the calf; then he told them: 'O my people! you have surely been unjust to yourselves by taking the calf (for worship), therefore turn to your Creator (penitently) and kill your people, that is best for you '.with your Creator

They asked him: `How should we kill our people?' Mūsa said to them: `Tomorrow everyone of you should come to Baytu 'l-Maqdis(٢) with a knife or a piece of iron or a sword; when I ascend the pulpit of the Children of Israel you should all keep your faces hidden, so that nobody should recognize the other at his side; then you should kill each other.' Thus seventy thousand of those who had worshipped the calf .assembled in Baytu 'l-Maqdis

When Musa finished praying with them and ascended the pulpit, they started killing each other. (This continued) until Jibrīl came down and said: `Now tell them, O Mūsa! to stop killing

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ad-Durru 'l-manthūr -١

Mūsa was called to the Mount Sini'i and given Torah while the Israelites were still in -٢ the wilderness. And it was at that time that the events in question took place. They had not entered Palestine at that time and Baytu 'l-Maqdis was not built yet. Therefore, the word "Baytu 'l-Maqdis" used in this tradition must mean the tent which .Mūsa erected for divine worship

'.each other), because Allah has accepted their repentance)

And (by that time) ten thousand of them had been killed. And Allah revealed: that is best for you with your Creator; so He turned to you (mercifully), for surely His is Oft-(returning (with mercy), the Merciful. "(١)

The author says: According to this tradition, the sentence, "that is best for you with your Creator", was said by Mūsa (a.s.) and was also used in the divine speech. In this way, Allah confirmed the word of Mūsa (a.s.), and made it clear that what had actually happened - the execution of ten thousand calf-worshippers - was all that was intended from the very beginning; and that the order of Musa was carried out in full, .and not partially

According to what appears from the wording of Mūsa (a.s.) , it was best for them if all of them were killed; but only some of them got killed, not all. By repeating the same words, Allah made it clear that what Mūsa (a.s.) had meant from the words, "the best .for you", was not the execution of all

The same at-Tafsīr says about the words of Allah: and We made the clouds to give shade over you: "When Mūsa crossed the sea with the Israelites, they landed at a desert. They said: 'O Mūsa! you have really destroyed and killed us, by bringing us from an inhabited land to a desert where there is, either any shadow or tree nor even '.water

At daytime a cloud appeared over

١- at-Tafsīr, al-Qummi

them to protect them from the sun; and at right, manna came down to them, settling on leaves, trees and stones, and they ate it; and at dinner time roasted birds fell on their dinner-spread, and when they finished eating and drinking, the birds (became .alive and) flew away

And Mūsa had a stone which he used to place in the midst of the station (of the caravan), striking it with his walking-stick and, lo! Twelve springs gushed from it, as Allah described, every spring going to the station of a particular tribe - and they were (twelve tribes."(١

Abu l-Hasan al-Madī (a.s.) said about the words of Allah: and they did not do Us any harm but they did harm their own selves: "Surely Allah is too powerful and too .unassailable to be harmed or to ascribe any harm to Himself

But He has joined us to Himself and took any injustice done to us as an injustice done to Him, and treated our love as His love; then He revealed it in a (verse of the) Qur'an to His Prophet, and said: and they did not do Us any harm, but they did harm their own (selves. The narrator says: "I said, `This is the revelation?' He said, `Yes."(٢

.(.The author says: Nearly the same thing has been narrated from al-Baqir (a.s

too unassailable to be harmed ": It is the explanation of the Qur'anic expression, . . ." "they did not do Us any harm"; the next sentence, "or to ascribe any

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at-Tafsīr, al-Qummi -١
al- Kafi -٢

harm to Himself", rejects also the opposite proposition. Allah can neither be harmed nor does He do any injustice Himself. Why did the narrator ask the question, "This is "?the revelation

Obviously, for a negative sentence to be plausible there should be a real or hypothetic possibility of a positive connection between the subject and its predicate. We do not say, "This wall does not see". Why? Because wall has no possible connection with .seeing. Now, Allah can have no possible connection at all with injustice or oppression

Therefore, the sentence, "they did not do Us any harm", would seem a superfluous and implausible assertion, because there was no need for saying that Allah could not be harmed nor did He harm anyone - unless it was meant to convey some fine point .to the listeners

And that point is this: Great persons often speak on behalf of their servants and dependants; likewise, Allah in this verse is speaking on behalf of Muhammad and his .progeny (peace be on them all), joining them to Himself in this declaration

as-Sadiq (a.s.) recited the verse: this was so because they disbelieved in the signs of Allah and killed the prophets unjustly; this was so because they disobeyed and :exceeded the limits, and then said

By God, they did not hit them with their hands, nor did they kill them with their" swords; but they heard their talks and announced it (to their enemies); so the ,prophets were caught on that charge and killed; this was the killing

(the exceeding the limit and the disobedience."(١)

The author says: A similar tradition from the same Imam is found in al-Kafi. Apparently, the Imam inferred it from the words, "this was so because they disobeyed . . ." Needless to say that murder, and especially of the prophets, and rejection of the signs of Allah cannot be termed as mere disobedience.

It should be the other way round. But if we take the disobedience to mean disclosing the secrets then it would be perfectly right to say that they killed the prophets, because they (disobeyed them and) did not keep their secrets and thus delivered them into the hands of their enemies who killed them.

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۶۲

point

(۶۲) إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَالَّذِينَ هَادُواْ وَالنَّصَارَى وَالصَّابِئِينَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحاً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلاَ خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabaeans, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve (۶۲).

Commentary

The verse first mentions the believers, and then says, "whoever believes in Allah . . ." The context shows that the latter phrase refers to the real belief, the true iman, and that the word, "those who believe", (mentioned at first) refers to those who call themselves believers.

The verse says that Allah gives no importance to names, like the believers, the Jews, the Christians or the

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١- al-`Ayyashī

Sabaeans. One cannot get a reward from Allah, nor can he be saved from :punishment, merely by giving oneself good titles, as they, for example, claim that

.(no one will enter the Garden except he who was a Jew or a Christian (۲:۱۱۱

The only criterion, the only standard, of honour and happiness is the real belief in Allah and the Day of Resurrection, accompanied by good deeds. It should be noted that Allah did not say, 'whoever of them believes'; otherwise it would have accorded some recognition to these titles, and would have implied that there was, after all, some .benefit in acquiring these names

This theme has been repeatedly expounded in the Qur'an. The honour and felicity depend entirely on true and sincere servitude; no name, no adjective, can do any .good unless it is backed by correct belief and good deeds

This rule is applicable to all human beings, right from the prophets to the lowest rank. Look how Allah praises His prophets with all beautiful and excellent attributes, and :then says

and if they had set up others (with Him) certainly what they did would have become .(ineffectual for them (۶:۸۸

Also, He describes the high status and great prestige of the Holy Prophet and his :companions, and then ends it with these words

Allah has promised those among them who believe and do good, forgiveness and a .(great reward (۴۸:۲۹

."Ponder on the significance of the phrase "among them

Then we find that Allah had given a man some of His signs but he

went astray:

and if We had pleased, We would certainly have exalted him thereby, but he clung to the earth and followed his low desire . . . (٧:١٧۶).

There are many verses clearly showing that the honour and respect with Allah depends on reality, not on appearance.

Tradition

Salman al-Farisi said: "I asked the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) about the people of that religion which I followed (prior to Islam), and I described their (way of) prayer and worship. Then it was revealed: Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews. . ."(١)

The author says: Various other Tradition with different chains of narrators, say that this verse was revealed about the people of Salman.

Ibn Faddal said: "I asked ar-Rida (a.s.) why "an-Nasara (النصارى = the Christians) were given that name. He said: "Because they were from a village called an-Nasirah (الناصره = Nazarath) in Syria.(٢) Maryam and `Isa settled there after they returned from Egypt."(٣)

The author says: We shall comment on this tradition when writing on the stories of `Isa (a.s.) in Chapter ٣ (The House of `Imran), God willing.

The same tradition says that "al-Yahūd (اليهود = the Jews) got this name because they are descended from Yahūda, son of Ya'qūb.(۴)

The Imam said: "The Sabaeans are a people, neither Zoroastrian nor Jews, neither Christians nor Muslims; they worship the stars and planets.(۵)

The author says: It is idol-worship of a special type; they worshipped only the idols of the stars, while others worshipped whatever idol caught their fancy.

A Historical Discussion

Abū Rayhan at-Bīrūnī writes in his book

ad-Durru 'l-manthūr -۱

In those days, all the land now divided into Syria, Jordan, Lebnon and Palestine, -۲ .was called Syria or Greater Syria

Ma`ani '۱-akhbar -۳

Ma`ani '۱-akhbar -۴

at-Tafsir, al-Qummi -۵

:al- 'atharu 'l-baqiyah

The earliest known among them (i.e., the claimants of prophethood was Yudhasaf.(۱)" He appeared in India at the end of the first year of the reign of Tahmurth; and he brought the Persian script. He called to the Sabaean religion, and a great many people .followed him

The Bishdadian kings and some of the Kayanis who resided in Balkh held the sun, the moon, the stars and the planets together with other elements in high esteem and .believed that these luminaries were very sacred

It continued until Zoroaster appeared at the end of the thirtieth year of Peshtasav's reign. The remnants of those Sabaeans are now in Harran, from which they have got .their new name, Harraniyyah

Also it is said that this nomenclature refers to Haran, son of Tarukh (Terah) and brother of Ibrahīm (a.s.), as he allegedly was one of their religious leaders and its .staunchest follower

Ibn Sancala, the Christian, has written a book against Sabaeans. In that book he has" attributed many ridiculous things to this Haran. For example, he describes the :Sabaeans' belief about Ibrahīm (a.s.) in these words

Ibrahīm (a.s.) was removed from their community because a white spot had" appeared on his foreskin, and the Sabaeans believed that a person having a white spot was unclean, and avoided mixing with such person. To remove that defect, Ibrahīm cut his foreskin, i.e. circumcised himself. Then he entered one of the temples; :and lo! an idol called out to him

O Ibrahīm! You went away from us with one"

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۱ - It is now almost certain that Yudhasaf is a corruption of Budhastav, the title of .Gautama Buddha, the founder of Bhuddhism

defect and came back with two; get out and do not ever come back to us." Ibrahīm was enraged; he smashed the idols; and went out. After some time, he felt remorse for what he had done, and decided to sacrifice his son on the altar of Jupiter, as it was their custom to kill their children to please the deities. When Jupiter was convinced of the sincerity of his repentance, it sent a lamb to him to slaughter in place of his son."

" Abdu 'l-Masīh ibn Ishaq al-Kindī wrote a book in reply of a book by 'Abdullah ibn' Isma'īl al-Hashimī. In that book `Abdu 'l-Masīh writes about the Sabaeans:

"'It is generally believed that they indulge in human sacrifice, although nowadays they cannot do so openly. But so far as our own information goes, they are monotheists who believe that God is free from every defect and evil, they describe God in negative, not positive, terms; for example, they say:

Allah cannot be defined or seen, He is not unjust or oppressive. According to them, the beautiful divine names may be used for God, but only in an allegorical sense, because no divine attribute can truly describe the reality.

They believe that the management of all affairs is done and controlled by the sky and the heavenly bodies; the sky and those bodies are living things having the characteristics of speech, hearing and sight.

They revere the light and the luminaries. One of their legacies is the dome above the niche in

the Umayyid mosque of Damascus; it was their prayer house, and at that time even the Greeks and the Romans followed the same religion. Then it came under Jewish control and they turned it into a synagogue. Later, the Christians took it over and .converted it into a church

Then came the Muslims, and they changed it into a mosque. The Sabaeans had their numerous places of worships, and their idols were named after various names of the sun, and shaped with fixed patterns, as has been described by Abu Ma'shar al-Balkhi .in his book, The Houses of Worship

For example, there was the temple of Ba'lbak which housed the idol of the sun; of Qiran, which was related to the moon and built in the moon's shape, like a shawl worn over head and shoulders. And there is a village nearby, Salamsīn by name; it is a corruption of its original name, صنَم سين (Sanam Sīn = the idol of the moon).

Likewise, another village is called Tara'ūz, that is, the gate of Venus. They do also claim that the Ka'bah and its idols belonged to them, and that the Meccan idol-worshippers were of the Sabaean religion. According to them the idols, Lat and `Uzza, .represented Saturn and Venus

They have many prophets in their hierarchy, most of them being the Greek philosophers, for example, Hermes of Egypt, Agadhimun, Walles, Pythagoras and .Babaswar (maternal grandfather of Plato) and many others like them

Some of them do not eat fish - lest it be

spume; nor poultry, because it is always hot. Also, they do not use garlic, because it creates headache and burns the blood and semen (which is the source of continuity of the human race); and they avoid beans, because it dulls the intelligence and also .because it had first sprouted in a human skull

They observe three compulsory prayers: at sunrise (eight rak `at); at noon (five rak .`at) ; and at the third hour of the night

They prostrate three times in each rak `ah. Also, they observe two optional prayers'" .- at the second and ninth hours of the day

They pray with taharah and wudu '; they take bath after janabah; but they do not` " circumcise their children because they have not been told to do so. Most of their laws concerning marital and penal codes are like thesharī `ah of Islam; while the rules .about touching a dead body are similar to Torah's

They offer sacrifices to the stars, their idols and the temples; the sacrificial animals are killed by the priests and witch-doctors, who read in it the future of the man who .offers the sacrifice and answer to his questions

Hermes is sometimes called Idris, who is mentioned in Torah as Akhnukh. Some of' " .them say that Yudhasaf was Hermes

Some others have said that the present-day Varraniyyah are not the real Sabaeans;' " rather these are mentioned in the books as heathens and idolators. The Sabaeans were those Israelites who stayed behind at Babylon when their majority

.returned to Jeruselem in the reigns of Cyrus and Artaxerxes

They were favourably disposed to Zoroastrian beliefs, as well as to the religion of Nebuchadnezzar. What resulted from this exercise was a mixture of Judaism and .Zoroastrianism – like the Samaritans of Syria

Most of them are found in Wasit and the rural areas of Iraq around Ja'far and Jamidah; they trace their genealogy to Enosh, son of Seth. They criticize and oppose the Harraniyyah and their religion. With exception of a few things, there is no similarity between the two religions: The Sabaeans face towards the North Pole in .their prayers, while the Harraniyyah face towards the South Pole

Some people of the book have said that Methuselah had a son (other than Lamech),' " named Sabī, whom the Sabaeans have descended from. The people, before the sharī`ah spread and before Yudhasaf appeared on the scene, followed Samanian .beliefs; they lived in the eastern part of the world and worshipped idols

Their remnants are found in India, China and Taghazghaz, and the people of Khurasan call them Shamnan. Their relics, places of worship and idols are seen in eastern Khurasan adjoining India. They believe in eternity of the universe and transmigration of soul. According to them, the sky is falling down in an endless '.vacuum, and that is why it is moving round and round

According to some writers, a group of them rejects the theory of eternity of the" ".universe and says that it came into being one million year ago

:The author says

All the above description has been taken from the book of al-Biruni. The opinion, attributed to some writers, that Sabaeans' religion was a mixture of Judaism and Zoroastrianism flavoured with some elements of Harraniyyah's beliefs, seems better suited in this context; after all, the verse obviously enumerates the groups which .followed a divinely inspired religion

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۶۳-۷۴

point

(۶۳) وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ خُذُواْ مَا آتَيْنَاكُم بِقُوَّةٍ وَاذْكُرُواْ مَا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

(۶۴) ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُم مِّن بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَلَوْلاَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَكُنتُم مِّنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

(۶۵) وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ الَّذِينَ اعْتَدَواْ مِنكُمْ فِي السَّبْتِ فَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُواْ قِرَدَةً خَاسِئِينَ

(۶۶) فَجَعَلْنَاهَا نَكَالاً لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهَا وَمَا خَلْفَهَا وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

(۶۷) وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَذْبَحُواْ بَقَرَةً قَالُواْ أَتَتَّخِذُنَا هُزُواً قَالَ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ

(۶۸) قَالُواْ ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّن لَّنَا مَا هِيَ قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ لاَّ فَارِضٌ وَلاَ بِكْرٌ عَوَانٌ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ فَافْعَلُواْ مَا تُؤْمَرونَ

(۶۹) قَالُواْ ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّن لَّنَا مَا لَوْنُهَا قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ صَفْرَاء فَاقِـعٌ لَّوْنُهَا تَسُرُّ النَّاظِرِينَ

(۷۰) قَالُواْ ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّن لَّنَا مَا هِيَ إِنَّ البَقَرَ تَشَابَهَ عَلَيْنَا وَإِنَّآ إِن شَاء اللَّهُ لَمُهْتَدُونَ

(۷۱) قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ لاَّ ذَلُولٌ تُثِيرُ الأَرْضَ وَلاَ تَسْقِي الْحَرْثَ مُسَلَّمَةٌ لاَّ شِيَةَ فِيهَا قَالُواْ الآنَ جِئْتَ بِالْحَقِّ فَذَبَحُوهَا وَمَا كَادُواْ يَفْعَلُونَ

(۷۲) وَإِذْ قَتَلْتُمْ نَفْساً فَادَّارَأْتُمْ فِيهَا وَاللَّهُ مُخْرِجٌ مَّا كُنتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ

(۷۳) فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبُوهُ بِبَعْضِهَا كَذَلِكَ يُحْيِي اللَّهُ الْمَوْتَى وَيُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

(۷۴) ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُم مِّن بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْحِجَارَةِ لَمَا يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ الأَنْهَارُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا

يَشَّقَقُ فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ الْمَاء وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللّهِ وَمَا اللّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

And when We took a promise from you and lifted the mountain over you ": "Take hold of what We have given you with firmness and bear in mind what is in it, so that you .(may guard (against evil)" (۶۳

Then you turned back after that; so were it not for the grace of Allah and His mercy on .(you, you would certainly have been among the losers (۶۴

And certainly you have known those among you who exceeded the limits of the .(Sabbath, so We said to them: "Be apes, despised and hated" (۶۵

So We made them an example to those who witnessed it and those who came after it, .(and an admonition to those who guard (against evil) (۶۶

And when Musa said to his people: "Surely Allah commands you that you should sacrifice a cow"; they said: "Do you ridicule us?" He said: "I seek the protection of Allah .(from being one of the ignorants" (۶۷

They said: "Call on your Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what she is". Musa said: "He says, Surely she is a cow neither advanced in age nor too young, of middle age .(between that (and this); do therefore what you are commanded "(۶۸

They said: "Call on your Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what her colour is." Musa said: "He says, surely she is a yellow cow; her colour is

.(intensely yellow, giving delight to the beholders" (۶۹

They said: "Call on your Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what she is, for surely .(to us the cows are all alike, and if Allah please we shall surely be guided aright" (۷۰

Musa said: "He says, Surely she is a cow not made submissive that she should plough the land, nor does she irrigate the tilth, sound, without a blemish in her." The said: `Now you have brought the truth;" so they sacrificed her, though they had not the .(mind to do (it) (۷۱

And when you killed a man, then you disagreed with respect to that, and Allah was to .(bring forth that which you were going to hide (۷۲

So, We said: "Strike the (dead body) with part of the (sacrificed cow)", thus Allah brings .(the dead to life, and He shows you His signs so that you may understand (۷۳

Then your hearts hardened after that, so that they were like rocks, rather worse in hardness; and surely there are some rocks from which streams burst forth, and surely there are some of them which split asunder so water issues out of them, and surely there are some of them which fall down for fear of Allah, and Allah is not at all . (heedless of what you do (۷۴

Commentary

is mountain; that is why has (الطور) "Qur'an: And lifted the mountain over you: "at-Tur mountain) in verse: And when We wrested = الجَبَل) "been substituted by "al-jabal

"away the mountain over them as if it were a covering overhead (۷:۱۷۱). "an-Natq (الن َ_تْق = to wrest away; to pull out).

The verse at first mentions taking of a promise; and ends with the command to take hold of what they were given and to bear in mind what was in it; in between it refers to the lifting of the mountain over them, without saying why it was lifted.

But the context clearly shows that it was done to frighten them without putting them under compulsion, in order that they might obey what they were told - if Allah had wished to compel them, there was no need to take any promise before.

Objection: If we were to take the sentence, "and lifted the mountain over you", in its literal meaning, it would be a miraculous sign that would have forced the Israelites to obey the given command under duress and coercion; but Allah says:

There is no compulsion in the religion (۲:۲۵۶);

. . . will you then force men till they become believers? (۱۰:۹۹).

Reply: The objection is baseless. The sentence shows only that they were threatened and frightened. Just lifting the mountain over their head was not enough to coerce and force them to believe and obey. Otherwise, most of the miracles shown by Musa (a.s.) could be termed as "compulsion"! The said questioner has tried to explain away this sentence in this way:

"The Israelites were at the foot of the mountain; it was shaken violently and during that convulsion its

summit loomed over them, until they thought that it was going to fall over them. It is this natural phenomenon that has been described as pulling out the mountain and ".lifting it over them

Such misinterpretations emanate from rejection of the principle of "miracle" altogether. We have already written in detail on this subject. If we were to explain away the verses of miracle in this way, no speech would remain safe from distortion; and no sentence could be taken to mean what it says; as a result, all the norms of .eloquence and literature would lose their value

is a particle meaning (لَعَلّ) "Qur'an: so that you may guard (against evil): "La'alla "perhaps", "may be"; it denotes hope - the speaker may be hoping for something, or the person spoken who gives rise to the hope, or the situation justifies the hope .although the speaker or the listener does not feel optimistic himself

In any case, it implies some uncertainty about the final outcome. When this particle is used in a divine speech, it indicates hopefulness either with reference to the listener or in context of the situation; but it can never refer to the speaker, that is, Allah, because He can never be uncertain of any result. It has clearly been explained by ar-Raghib in his al-Mufradat. Therefore, whenever this word is used in the Qur'an, it is ". . . translated as "so that . . . ", "in order that

.(despised, humiliated = خاسئين) "Qur'an: Be apes despised: "Khasi'īn

Qur'an: So

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means exemplary punishment meted (النَّ_كال) "We made them an example: "an-Nakal .out to one in order that others may desist from such transgression

Qur'an: And when Musa said to his people: "Surely Allah commands you that you should sacrifice a cow. . . ": This is the story of the cow of the Israelites, and it is these .verses which have given this chapter its name, the Cow

The Qur'an has used a dramatic style for this story. It opens with the middle of the story (verses ۶۷ to ۷۱), followed by its beginning (verse ۷۲) and ending with its .(conclusion (verse ۷۳

Another thing to note is the changes of the pronouns - upto verse ۶۶, the Israelites were directly addressed in second person; but verses ۶۷ to ۷۱ are addressed to the Prophet mentioning the Israelites in third person; then it reverts again to the original .(second person (verses ۷۲ - ۷۳

However, let us follow the narrative in the light of the Qur'an. Allah addresses the Prophet referring to the Israelites in third person: "And when Musa said to his people: ". . . `Surely Allah commands you that you should sacrifice a cow'; they said

Obviously the order given to sacrifice a cow with subsequent description of its various characteristics and qualities, contained in these five verses (۶۷ -۷۱) , is like a parenthetic statement which clarifies the meaning of the next two verses (۷۲ -۷۳), :addressed to the Israelites

And when you killed a man, then you disagreed with respect to"

that, and Allah was to bring forth that which you were going to hide. So We said: `Strike the (dead body) with part of the (sacrificed cow),' thus Allah brings the dead to ” .life, and He shows you His signs that you may understand

The five verses (۶۷ -۷۱) also show how ill-mannered the Israelites were; how offensive their behaviour was towards their prophet. See how off-handedly they accused their prophet of speaking idle words, how arrogantly they made demand after demand of the Lord to make His command clear and plain, as though there was .any ambiguity in the divine command or the prophetic utterance

Add to it their insulting mode of referring to God: Musa had told them, “Surely Allah commands you . . .”; but they repeatedly used the words, “Call on your Lord for our .sake . . .”, as though He was not their Lord

Then again they went on repeating the demand to be told “what she is”, “what her colour is”; and when all was explained to them, they arrogantly claimed, “Surely to us the cows are all alike”. It should be noted that they did not say that that particular cow seemed indistinct to them; they instead claimed that all the cows were alike in their eyes - implying that the cows per se were the same, and if a certain individual cow had some special quality, this much description was not enough for identification purpose; they did not realize that it was not

.the cow, but the divine will, which produced the desired result

They were given a simple command to sacrifice “a cow ”, that is, any cow; they should have acted on that general unrestricted command, but they went on asking for more .and more particulars; this was in itself a height of arrogance

Then, look at their rudeness in asking their prophet, “Do you ridicule us?” It cast an aspersion on the prophet that he was, God forbid, an ignorant person who talked aimlessly. That is why he vehemently defended himself saying, “I seek the protection .”of Allah from being one of the ignorants

Even then, they had the temerity to say at the end of the story, “Now you have brought the truth”, implying that the previous explanations were not “the truth”, that !the preceding divine speech and prophetic messages were, God forbid, untruths

This story is not mentioned in the current Torah. Therefore, it was better not to address it to the Israelites. This may be another reason of changing the mode of address – the story was initially addressed to the Prophet, and after establishing the base, the pronouns were again changed to the original second person directly addressing the Israelites. Nevertheless, the Torah contains an order that implies that :some such events must have taken place

If one be found slain in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it,“ lying in the field, and it be not known who hath slain him: Then thy elders and

thy judges shall come forth, and they shall measure unto the cities which are round :about him that is slain

And it shall be, that the city which is next unto the slain man, even the elders of that city shall take an heifer, which hath not been wrought with, and which hath not drawn the yoke: And the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto a rough valley, which is neither eared nor sown, and shall strike off the heifer's neck there in the :valley

And the priests the sons of Levi shall come near; for them the Lord the God hath chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in the name of the Lord; and by their word shall every controversy and every stroke be tried. And all the elders of that city, that are next unto the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in -the valley

And they shall answer and say: Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. Be merciful, O Lord, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel's charge. And the blood shall be (forgiven them." (Deut., ٢١:١ - ٨

It must now be clear that the story as given here is not intended as a simple narrative. The main theme is taken up in verse ٧٢ (And when you killed a man . . .), but before that, a part of

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the story is narrated to the Prophet in some detail in verses ۶۷ - ۷۱ for obvious .reasons

Let us now recapitulate what has been explained above, The verses ۶۷-۷۱ (And when Musa said to his people: "Surely Allah commands you . . .), addressed to the Prophet, is a prologue to the forthcoming episode (verses ۷۲ - ۷۳), although the listeners do not .know it yet

As the audience does not know why the Israelites were told to sacrifice a cow, its curiosity is aroused and the suspense continues until the relation between the sacrifice of the cow and detection of the murderer is revealed. It was this apparent irrelevance of the former to the latter that prompted the Israelities to accuse Musa .(a.s.) of ridiculing them, of joking with them

This accusation showed that they were completely devoid of discipline, were very arrogant and disobedient. They were not inclined to obey any command without .knowing its why and wherefore

They were not ready to believe in that which they could not see - belief in the unseen :(.was against their grain. They were the people who had said to Musa (a.s

.(O Musa! we will not believe in you until we see Allah manifestly" (۲:۵۵"

Their trouble was that they wanted total independence in every affair, no matter whether it was within their domain or not. They erroneously thought that the unseen .could be brought down to the level of the seen

Consequently, they wanted to adopt a deity which they could see by their naked

:eyes

They said: "O Musa! make for us a god as they have (their) gods.," He said: "Surely you .(are a people acting ignorantly" (۷:۱۳۸

No wonder that they did not understand the sublime status of their prophet Musa (a.s.) and thought that he, like themselves, followed his own desires and joked with, and ridiculed, the people. They accused him of joking and acting like ignorant ones. And Musa (a.s.) had to refute this charge: "I seek the protection of Allah from being ."one of the ignorants

Why did Musa (a.s.) seek the protection of Allah? Why did not he say straight away that he was not an ignorant person? It was because Musa (a.s.) preferred to rely on .the divine protection which cannot fail, rather than on his own virtues

The Israelites believed that one should not accept anything without proof. This principle is correct, of course. But they were mistaken in believing that man must know the reason of every order in full detail; that a command of general nature was not enough. That is why they went on asking for more and more detail about the cow .they were told to slaughter

They thought that the cow, by its nature, could not bring a dead body to life; if somewhere there was a particular cow possessing this unheard of quality, it should be pin-pointed with accurate and detailed description. It was this trend of thought which prompted them to say: "Call on your Lord for our sake to make it plain to

."us what she is

They unnecessarily put themselves into a corner; and Allah, on this uncalled for demand, gave them a few particulars; "Musa said: `He says, Surely she is a cow neither advanced in age (i.e. not passed the calf-bearing age) nor too young (i.e. not virgin, nor one that has not given birth to a calf yet) of middle age between that (and .means a female in middle of child-bearing age (العَوان) " this)." "al- 'Awan

Then their Lord took mercy on them and admonished them not to indulge in too much questioning, and to be content with that which they were told: "do therefore what you are commanded ". But they did not listen to the divine advice and said: " `Call on your :Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what her colour is.' Musa said

He says, surely she is a yellow cow; her colour is intensely yellow, giving delight to` the beholders.' "This much explanation should have been enough for them, as by then the cow's age and colour had been described to them. But no, it was not enough for the Israelites who unhesitatingly repeated their first question, shamelessly accusing :Musa - and God too - of not giving them clear description as yet

They said: `Call on your Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what she is, for surely" to us the cows are all alike, and if Allah please we shall surely be guided aright.' "So, Allah further

:particularized her nature and characteristics, saying

Surely she is a cow not made submissive that she should plough land, nor does she“ irrigate the tilth”; and then He put a further restriction about her colour, “sound, without a blemish in her.” Now that they were given all the details and could not think ”.of any more questions, they said: “Now you have brought the truth

The sentence shows that they had to accept the command because they could not think of any more excuses to avoid it - but even then they put the blame of their previous disobedience on Musa - and by implication on Allah: that they had not complied with the order before because Musa (a.s.) and Allah had not explained it correctly. All this is implied in the last clause, “so they sacrificed her, though they had ”.(not the mind to do (it

Qur’an: And when you killed a man . . . : It is the beginning of the main story. “at-Tadaru' (التّدارء = translated here as “disagreed”) is derived form ad-dar' (الدّرء = repulse) and literally means to push one another. A man was killed and every group was disowning its responsibility, putting the blame on others. But Allah was to disclose .what they wanted to hide

Qur’an: So We said: “Strike the (dead body) with part of the (sacrificed cow)”: The Arabic text contains two pronouns -the first (masculine) refers to the dead body and the second (feminine) to the cow. The translation omits the pronouns

.replacing them with the nouns they stand for

Someone has denied the actuality of this story, suggesting that the verses simply describe the promulgation of a law (as given in the Deut., ۲۱:۱- ۸, quoted above). According to him, raising someone from the dead (mentioned in these verses) merely :means finding out the identity of the killer - as Allah says

.(And there is life for you in (the law of) retaliation (۲:۱۷۹

In short, he claims that there was no miracle involved, nor was there any dead body brought back to life. But the context of the story leaves no room for such misinterpretation - especially if we look at the words, "So We said: `Strike the (dead ".body) with part of the (sacrificed cow)', thus Allah brings the dead to life

Qur'an: Then your hearts hardened after that, so that they were like rocks, rather sternness) in heart is like "hardness" in rock. = القَسوه) " worse in hardness: "al-Qaswah .(rather = بَل) or) is used here in the meaning of bal = أو) ""Aw

The next sentences show why their hearts were worse than rocks in hardness: "and surely there are some rocks from which streams burst forth". The sentence offers a contrast between rocks and water. Rocks are used as examples of hardness, while .water is proverbially used to denote softness

Even then, there are some rocks - with all their hardness - from which streams of water - with all its softness - burst forth; "and surely there are some of

them which split asunder so water issues out of them ": The hard rocks send forth the soft waters; but the Israelites' hearts were so hard as never to allow any truth to .issue out of them

Qur'an: and surely there are some of them which fall down for fear of Allah: We see how the rocks and stones fall down - big rocks on the summits of mountains crack up, .and then an ordinary earthquake is enough to dislodge them causing an avalanche

Also, the cracks fill up with ice and snow during winter, then the warmth of spring melts the ice sending the streams down the valleys. This phenomenon is related to its .natural causes, yet Allah says that the rocks fall down from fear of Allah

Why? Because all the natural causes ultimately return to the First Cause, that is, Allah. Rocks, when they fall down because of the natural causes, are in fact obeying the .divine decree which put them under the influence of those secondary causes

It may, therefore, be said that they understand the command of their Lord - an understanding that is created nature. They obey the decree of Allah inasmuch as they :are thus moulded by Him. Allah says

and there is not a single thing but glorifies Him with His praise, but you do not ;(understand their glorification (۱۷:۴۴

.(all are obedient to Him (۲:۱۱۶

Fear too is based on perception, as are the glorifying and the obeying. It may therefore be said that the rocks fall down

:for fear of Allah. This sentence is of the same genre as the following ones

And the thunder declares His glory with His praise, and the angels too for awe of Him ;((۱۳:۱۳

And whoever is in the heavens and the earth makes obeisance to Allah only, willingly .(and unwillingly, and their shadows too at morn and eve (۱۳:۱۵

Here the sound of thunder has been counted as the declaration of divine glory and the shadow is said to prostrate for Allah. There are many verses of the same style and all .are based on the same analysis as mentioned above

However, the sentence, "and surely there are some of them which fall down for fear of Allah", further shows how the Jews' hearts were worse than rocks in hardness: The rocks are afraid of Allah and do fall down for His fear, but there is no fear of Allah in .the Jews' hearts, they are not afraid of divine wrath

Tradition

As -Sadiq (a.s.) was asked about the words of Allah: Take hold of what We have given you with firmness, whether it meant the strength of the bodies or the firm resolution (of the heart. He (a. s.) said: "Both together"(۱

.The author says: This tradition has also been narrated by al-`Ayyashī in his at-Tafsīr

Al-Halabi narrates in explanation of the words of Allah; and bear in mind what is in it, that he said: "Bear in mind what is in it and also bear in mind the chastisement that is (laid down for its negligence."(۲

The

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al -Mahdsin -۱

al-`Ayyashī -۲

author says: It has been inferred from the position of this clause - it follows the threat .implied in lifting the mountain over them

Abu Hurayrah said that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) said: “If the children of Israel had not said: and if Allah please we shall surely be guided aright, they would have .(never been given (respite

And had they (in the beginning) taken any cow and slaughtered her; it would have been enough for them; but they went on pressing (for more and more particulars), so (Allah made it harder (and harder) for them.”(١

Ibn Faddal said: “I heard Abu '١-Hasan (a.s.) saying: `Surely Allah ordered the children of Israel to slaughter a cow - and what they needed was its tail. (But they asked for (more and more details) so Allah made it harder (and harder) for them.' ”(٢

al-Bazantī said: “I heard ar-Rida (a.s.) saying: `A man from the children of Israel killed one of his relatives, then he took the body and put it in the path (leading) to the best of .the Israelities' clans. Thereafter he came demanding (the revenge of) his blood

Musa (a.s.) was informed that such and such a clan had killed such and such a man, and he was asked to tell them who the killer was. Musa said: “Bring me a cow.” They ”?said: “Do you ridicule us

He said: “I seek the protection of Allah from being one of the ignorants. ” And had they taken any cow, it would have

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ad-Durru 'l-manthūr -١

at-Tafsīr, al-Qummi -٢

been enough for them, but they pressed (for more particulars); therefore Allah made .it harder for them

They said:"Call on your Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what she is" : Musa said: "He says, Surely she is a cow neither advanced in age nor too young, of middle age ."(between that (and this

Even then, if they had taken any cow (fitting this description) it would have been .enough. But they pressed for more, so Allah made it harder for them

They said: "Call on your Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what her colour is" . Musa said: "He says, Surely she is a yellow cow; her colour is intensely yellow, giving ."delight to the beholders

Even then if they had taken any such cow, it would have been enough for them. But .they persisted (in asking for more details) and Allah made it even harder for them

They said: "Call on your Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what she is, for surely to us the cows are all alike, and if Allah please we shall surely be guided aright". He said: "He says, Surely she is a cow not made submissive that she should plough the land, nor does she irrigate the tilth, sound, without a blemish in her." They said: ` Now ."you have brought the truth

They began their search and found such a cow with an Israelite youth. He said: "I shall not sell it but for a

hide full of gold." Thereupon they came to Musa and informed him. He told them to .buy it. So they bought and brought it

And Musa ordered it to be slaughtered. Then he ordered them to strike the dead body with its tail. As soon as they did so, the murdered man rose from the dead, and said: "O messenger of Allah! Surely it is my cousin who had killed me, and not the man ".against whom he has lodged his claim

In this way, they knew who the killer was. Thereafter, a companion of the messenger of Allah, Musa, said to him: "There is a story behind this cow". He asked: "And what is .it?" He said: "(That) Israelite youth was very devoted to his father

And he purchased some goods, and came to his father (who was asleep) and keys were under his head. And he did not like to awaken his father, and cancelled the deal. :When his father woke up, he told him about it. The father said to him

Well done! Take this cow; it is a recompense for what you have lost.' " The ` messenger of Allah, Musa, said to him: "Look at the faithfulness and good deed, where " '"?does it take its people to

The author says: The Tradition perfectly fit the description which we inferred from the .verses

A Philosophical Discourse About Making The Dead Bodies Alive And About Metamorphosis

This chapter describes several miraculous signs in the stories of the Israelites and the others - for example, parting the sea and drowning the followers of Pharaoh (And when

We parted the sea for you, so We saved you and drowned the followers of Pharaoh . . .); giving death to the Israelites by thunder-bolt and then raising them again from .(" . . .dead (And when you said: "O Musa! we will not believe in you

Making the clouds to give shade over them and sending for them manna and quails (And We made the clouds to give shade over you . . .) ; making the streams to gush out from the rock (And when Musa prayed for drink. . .); lifting the mountain over them (. . . and lifted the mountains over you . . .); transforming some of them into apes (. . . so We said to them: "Be apes. . . ") and bringing a dead body back to life by hitting it with a part of a slaughtered cow (So We said: "Strike the [dead body] with part of the . ("[. . . [sacrificed cow

Among the non-Israelites, there are many stories of dead men and / or animals brought back to life - for example, a large group that had fled their homes for fear of death (Did you not see those who went forth from their homes. . .) ; a chosen servant of Allah who passed by a ruined town (Or like him who passed by a town and it had fallen down upon its roofs. . .) and the birds which were raised from

dead through the agency of Ibrahim (And when Ibrahim said: "My Lord! show me how .(. . . Thou givest life to the dead

Altogether, there are twelve miracles, most of them occurring among the Israelites. The Qur'an has narrated them; and we have already shown that miracles do occur, and super-natural events do take place. We have also shown that such happenings .are not in conflict with the system of the cause and effect

It was clearly proved that it is not justified to interpret the verses of miracle in such a way as to deny their apparent meanings. Of course, the miracle is not related to an inherently impossible proposition, like dividing three in two equal wholes, or birth of a .child that would be his own father

But if something is possible in itself and the Qur'an says that it did happen, one should .not try to explain it away as an allegory or a metaphor

However, some miracles, like raising someone from dead and transformation, that is, metamorphosis, require a somewhat detailed study because they are sometimes .criticized from philosophical point of view

Objection: It is an accepted fact that if an existent thing, a being, having a potentiality of perfection, converts it into actuality, then it is impossible for it to retrace its steps and turn that actuality back into the same potentiality. Likewise, a more perfect being .does not change, in its forward march, to a less perfect one

When a man dies, his soul is released from the fetters

of matter; he becomes an immaterial "idea" or a spiritual being. Both these stages are above the matter; the existence in these planes is much stronger than that in the .material sphere

Therefore, it is impossible for a soul - once death has separated it from the body - to re-establish its connection with that material body. Otherwise, it would mean that a thing, having converted its potentiality into actuality, again retrogressed to the same .potentiality - and as we have explained above it is not possible

Also, man is on a higher level of existence than that of the animals. Therefore, it would .be impossible for a man to change, by metamorphosis, into an animal

Reply: Accepted that once a potentiality is turned into reality it cannot be regressed to the self-same potentiality. But raising someone from dead in this world, as well as .metamorphosis, is outside the domain of this law

Perception and reason show that a vegetable substance, when consumed by an animal, proceeds to its ultimate perfection, that is, animality, and takes the animal form. This form in itself is an incorporeal and immaterial thing. Having reached this stage, the vegetable has turned its potentiality into actuality. Now it cannot turn back .to vegetable kingdom

The animality is the fountain-head of the animal's conscious actions and perceptions. When it performs a deed an impression is outlined on its psyche. When it indulges in the same activity over and over again, that impression gets deeper and deeper until it becomes an ineradicable

.trait

This new trait may become the building block of an animal species with pronounced characteristics; for example, the fox with its cunning, the pig with its lascivious lust, .the panther with its predatory stalking

If, on the other hand, it fails to acquire any characteristics, the psyche remains at its original level of simple animality. It is like the case of a vegetable which fails to reach .the threshold of animality and remains at the original level of vegetable-kingdom

Likewise, an animal, becoming a part of a human being, progresses forward on the path of humanity. A human being has the capacity of perceiving his self in absolute incorporeal terms. When it thus changes its potentiality to this actuality, it is im… .possible for it to go back to the self-same potentiality

The humanity too, by repeatedly doing a certain type of deed, acquires especial traits and characteristics - and it creates various kinds of human beings with their particular .properties in the same way as happens in animal kingdom

Now, let us suppose that a dead man was returned to life in this world, and his soul re-established its relation to the matter, that is, the body. Obviously, it would not affect the incorporeality of the soul - it was incorporeal in the first life, remained so after .that connection was severed, and would remain in this second life too

Body is the tool by which the soul carries on its material and intellectual activities, just as an artisan makes articles with the help of

his tools and equipments. When the man died, the soul lost that tool; when he was .revived the soul regained the possession and control of that tool

Now, it may use that tool to acquire new talents, to attain to a higher level of perfection than before. It cannot, by any stretch of imagination, be said to be a retrogression or a retreat from perfection to imperfection, nor is it a change from .reality to potentiality

Objection: The scenario given above entails perpetual compulsion, which is obviously a false and void proposition. An incorporeal and immaterial soul, separated by death from the body, does not have any more potentials of acquiring further perfection .through re-establishment of its relation to the body

Remember that only a negligible number of people are claimed to have risen from the dead. And the multitude of human beings remain unrevived. If it were in their nature to acquire new perfections through re-establishing their link with their bodies and - yet they were denied that opportunity, they would be perpetually deprived of what their nature demanded. And this perpetual deprivation is nothing but perpetual .compulsion

Reply: There is no compulsion involved here at all. The soul has already progressed from its potentiality to the actuality. It reached a certain level and died. Now, at present it does not have any more potentiality. It will continue to possess the actuality .it has already acquired

Let us suppose that there is a man who did some good and some bad deeds, and then .died

Had he remained alive he could have added to his deeds and acquired a somewhat .different spiritual form, either lovelier or uglier than before

Likewise, if he is returned to life, he may acquire better or worse traits than before. But if he is not revived, then he already owns his actuality, and will accordingly be re-warded or punished in al-Barzakh, until he acquires a spiritual form according to his .earned qualities

Even then, if he is returned to this world, he would get new potentiality for spiritual perfection, and may acquire another spiritual form by using the material tool, for example, his body. But, if he is not returned, there is neither any potentiality nor any .question of compulsion, perpetual or otherwise

We should not forget that mere deprivation of a possible perfection is not a compulsion. Otherwise, every happening in this world could be called a perpetual compulsion. Every event, every development here affects each and every thing of the .universe, directly or indirectly

There is a never-ending struggle and conflict going on in the universe; and it affects the whole system - including the ability of a man to fully attain to his perfection. That effect may be beneficial or harmful. But nobody claims that because he was prevented, by the circumstances beyond his control, from obtaining a possible .benefit, he was under perpetual compulsion

If a talent for a certain perfection is ingrained in someone's nature and then he is prevented from achieving it, either by some factors in his own

nature or some external forces bent on nullifying that talent, then only it may be called a perpetual compulsion - because in this case, putting that talent or potentiality .in that species be a vain thing, an aimless venture

Now we come to metamorphosis. If a man's figure is transformed to that of a pig or an ape, it is just an external change. He is still a man in the form of an animal; not that .his humanity was erased and replaced by the nature of pig or ape

We have already described that when one repeatedly carries on an activity, its impression is etched on one's psyche. When a man repeatedly indulges in debauchery, his psyche turns into that of a pig; and it is not impossible for that figure to appear in his facial features in this world too - as it would certainly appear in the next world. Such a man is still a man, albeit a transformed one; not that he has lost his .humanity

By the way, we sometimes read, in the newspapers and magazines, reports of academic conferences in Europe and America that tend to prove that it is possible to revive a man after his death, and that a man's facial figures may change to something else. Of course, we do not base over belief on such news and reports; nevertheless, .we expect our adversaries not to forget today what they had read yesterday

Poser: Then there is no difficulty in believing in transmigration of the

.souls

Reply: There is a world of difference between metamorphosis and transmigration of the souls. In metamorphosis the same body changes its figure to look like something else; while the believers in transmigration of the souls say that a soul, after attaining .its perfection and leaving the body, establishes a new connection with a new body

Obviously, it is an impossible proposition. A question may be asked whether or not the new body was already connected to a soul of its own. If it already belonged to another soul, it would entail domination of one body by two souls, which is impossible - two .persons cannot have one body, nor can one body be governed by two personalities

If, on the other hand, the body did not have a soul already, it would mean that an accomplished and developed soul was burdened by an unaccomplished and undeveloped body. It would certainly be a regression from actuality to potentiality - .just like returning a wise old man to his infancy! And this too is impossible

Also, it should be apparent from what we have explained that it is certainly impossible for a human soul, after leaving its human body, to be incarnated in a vegetable or animal body. In short, the belief in transmigration of the souls entails impossibility .after impossibility

An Academic And Ethical Discourse On Unquestioning Adoption Of Concepts And Rulings

The nation, most frequently described in the Qur'an, is that of the Israelites; and the prophet most numerously referred to therein is their prophet, Musa (a.s.), son of `Imran. His name has been mentioned in

one hundred and thirty six places, twice as many as the second most numerously mentioned name, that is, of Ibrahīm (a.s.), who has been named sixty-nine times only (- as some people have calculated.(۱)

It is not difficult to understand the reason for these frequent references. Islam, the true religion, is based on the belief of monotheism; its present foundation was laid by Ibrahīm (a.s.) ; and Allah completed and perfected it for His Prophet, Muhammad :(s.a.w.a.), as He says

(the faith of your father Ibrahīm; He named you Muslims before and in this . . . (۲۲:۷۸ . . . .

And the Israelites were the most disputatious and most querrelsome of all the nations; they were the most obstinate and most abstruse of all when there was a .question of submitting to the truth

And the heathens of Arabia, whom the Prophet of Islam had to contend with, were of :the same mould, so much so that Allah said to His Prophet

Surely those who disbelieve alike is to them whether you warn them or do not warn .(them, they will not believe (۲:۶

Every vice, every depravity found in the Israelites could be found in them; they, in .their hard-heartedness and impertinence were the mirror-image of the Israelites

Ponder over the stories of the Israelites, as narrated in the Qur'an; look at the picture of their characters and morals as it emerges from those narratives. You will find a .nation deeply submerged in sensualism and materialism

They did not believe in what was beyond the

.Vide al-Muyamu '۱-mufahris, by Muhammad Fu'ad `Abdu'۱-Baqi -۱

reach of their external senses; for them spiritual happiness was a word without meaning; their only ambition was the pursuit of sensual pleasure; their eyes could not focus on intellectual progress or spiritual perfection, so their only aim in life was the .material development

And to this day, they have not changed a whit. It was this tendency which made their mind and will totally subservient to the matter and the material phenomena. They did not understand except that which they could see, hear, touch, taste or smell; they did .not strive but for some tangible and material goals

Their servitude to the sensual phenomena prevented them from accepting any thing outside the domain of the five senses - even if it was truth; their thralldom to matter encouraged them to accept every thing told by their materially advanced big bosses - even if it was false. It created a clear contrariety and inconsistency in their words and .deeds

They condemned every adoption of others' concepts, ridiculing it as blind following, if that concept was unperceivable by the external senses - no matter how correct it was. And at the same time, they appreciated every adoption of others' concepts, labeling it as the pleasure of life, if it conformed with their material base desires - no .matter how wrong that concept was

This trait became deeply rooted in their psyche during their long sojourn in Egypt, where the Egyptians humiliated them, enslaved them and castigated them; they subjected them to severe torment, killed their

.sons sparing their daughters, and in this was a great trial for them from their Lord

However, it was this deep-rooted trait which made them heedless to what their prophets and divine scholars told them about what was good for them in this life as well as in the hereafter. (Remember their disputations with Musa and others!) And these very people were ever ready to accept and follow what their big bosses called .them to, for gratification of their worldly desires

Today the truth and reality has been afflicted by this very tragedy. The modern civilization, presented to the humanity by the western world, is likewise based on .sensual perception and material outlook

It is not prepared to accept any proof for something which is not perceivable by the external senses; and does not ask for any proof of validity, if a thing gives materal .and sensual pleasure

This has resulted in weakening of the hold of human instincts, and in disappearance of deep knowledge and high morals from our society. This trait has exposed the edifice of humanity to ruin, and is confronting the society with chaos and disorder. And you .will surely see its real face in a not too distant future

Actually, not every proof is asked for, nor every unquestioning adoption of others' ideas and concepts is objectionable. Man proceeds on the road of perfection through his intentional activities. His actions emanate from his will, and the will springs from .thought and notion

Thinking, therefore, is the foundation of his perfection. Man

depends on practical or intellectual cognition to which his perfection is directly or indirectly related. This cognition creates in his mind the need for individual or collective actions; this knowledge leads to intention and will which produces the .desired activity

Man, by his instinct, tries to find out the cause of every event, happening inside or outside his self. He does not do any action without knowing its reason; he does not .accept any theory without ascertaining its proof

It is his unfailing trait; he always looks for the cause of the events and actions; it is his nature and the nature never deviates from its set course. But this trait puts an unbearable burden on him. No individual can accomplish all the academic and .practical processes required for his material and spiritual well-being

It is this burden which led the man to establish a society and cooperate with other human beings. Various people were given responsibilities to perform various tasks, in order that the society, taken as a whole, might collectively accomplish all tasks, and .fulfill all the needs of all its members put together

Human needs are expanding by leaps and bounds; various branches of knowledge - sciences, technologies, arts etc. - are growing larger and larger, to such an extent that every subject has grown into hundreds of subjects - each requiring its own .specialists

Look for example, at medical science. In old days it was a branch of physics; now it has branched out into hundreds of independent subjects, and no

.single physician or surgeon may gain expertise in more than one or two of them

This vast multitude of special fields has instinctively led man to limit his inquiry for cause, and his search for proof, to only those branches of knowledge in which he has gained some expertise; and accept and follow the verdicts of other specialists in other .fields

A sane person invariably always relies on the experts in the fields of their expertise. The confidence in their expertise creates a certainty that what has been said or done .is correct; and this serves as the proof demanded by human nature

The nature dictates that man should try his best to find out the detailed proof of the rightness of his idea and action in the fields of his specialty; and as a corollary it directs that he should unquestioningly accept the concepts and verdicts of others in .other fields

In short, an ignorant man should follow the decree of a learned one. It is impossible for one man to be an expert in all the branches of knowledge, or independent in all the activities necessary for his life and well-being. Therefore, it is impossible for any man to be free from blindly following a lot of experts in numerous avenues of life. Anyone .claiming contrary to this, is a fool

Of course, it is a shame if a man remains content with unquestioning following, even where he can form an independent opinion based on detailed knowledge; as it is a shame if

he forms independent opinion without acquiring necessary knowledge. Both trends are undesirable, both are ruinous to a healthy civilization, both are dangerous to the .society

It is the prerogative of Allah that His decrees and orders be followed without any questioning, without any if or but; because He is the First and Final cause, an no other .cause or reason is needed when He has spoken

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۷۵–۸۲

point

(۷۵) أَفَتَطْمَعُونَ أَن يُؤْمِنُواْ لَكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلاَمَ اللّهِ ثُمَّ يُحَرِّفُونَهُ مِن بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

(۷۶) وَإِذَا لَقُواْ الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ قَالُواْ آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلاَ بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَىَ بَعْضٍ قَالُواْ أَتُحَدِّثُونَهُم بِمَا فَتَحَ اللّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لِيُحَآجُّوكُم بِهِ عِندَ رَبِّكُمْ أَفَلاَ تَعْقِلُون

(۷۷) وَلاَ يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ

(۷۸) وَمِنْهُمْ أُمِّيُّونَ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ الْكِتَابَ إِلاَّ أَمَانِيَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلاَّ يَظُنُّون

(۷۹) فَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يَكْتُبُونَ الْكِتَابَ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ هَـذَا مِنْ عِندِ اللّهِ لِيَشْتَرُواْ بِهِ ثَمَناً قَلِيلاً فَوَيْلٌ لَّهُم مِّمَّا كَتَبَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَوَيْلٌ لَّهُمْ مِّمَّا يَكْسِبُونَ

(۸۰) وَقَالُواْ لَن تَمَسَّنَا النَّارُ إِلاَّ أَيَّاماً مَّعْدُودَةً قُلْ أَتَّخَذْتُمْ عِندَ اللّهِ عَهْدًا فَلَن يُخْلِفَ اللّهُ عَهْدَهُ أَمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللّهِ مَا لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

(۸۱) بَلَى مَن كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَأَحَاطَتْ بِهِ خَطِيـئَتُهُ فَأُوْلَـئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

(۸۲) وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَـئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

Do you then hope that they would believe in you? While a party from among them indeed used to hear the word of Allah, then altered it after they had understood it, and .(they know (this) (۷۵

And when they meet those who believe they say: “We believe”; and when they are alone

one with another they say: “Do you talk to them of what Allah has disclosed to you that they may argue with you by this before your Lord? Do you not then understand?” .((۷۶

What! Do they not know that Allah knows what they conceal and what they proclaim? .((۷۷

And there are among them illiterates who know not the Book but only lies, and they do .(but conjecture (۷۸

Woe, then, to those who write the book with their hands and then say: “This is from Allah ”, so that they may sell it for a small price; therefore woe to them for what their .(hands have written and woe to them for what they earn (thereby) (۷۹

And they say: “Fire shall not touch us but for a few days. ” Say: “Have you taken a promise from Allah, then Allah will never fail to keep His promise, or do you speak .(against Allah what you do not know?” (۸۰

Yea! whoever earns evil and his sins beset him on every side, these are the inmates of .(the Fire; in it they shall abide (۸۱

And (as for) those who believe and do good deeds, these are the dwellers of the (garden; in it they shall abide (۸۲

Commentary

The context shows that the unbelievers, and especially those of Medina, thought that the Jews were the likeliest people to help and support the Apostle of Allah at his advent. The pagan tribes of Aws and Khazraj lived with the Jews of Medina, and they knew that

the latter followed a divine religion and a revealed book. Thus it was not too much to .expect them to believe in the latest in the series of divine religions and books

This was the basis of their hope that the Jews would accept the Apostle of Allah as the true prophet, and would strengthen the cause of religion, and actively participate in the propagation of truth. But no sooner did the Prophet migrate to Medina than the Jews showed their latent hostility. The hope was shattered and the expectation .turned to disappointment

That is why Allah addresses the believers, saying: "Do you then hope that they would believe in you?" Concealment of truth and alteration of divine words was their deep-rooted life-pattern. Why wonder if they go back on what they used to say before the ?advent of Islam

Qur'an: Do you then hope . . . and they know this: The speech is now addressed to the Prophet and the believers, referring to the Jews in third person. This same style was used in the preceding story of the Cow, because the Jews had omitted the event from the Torah. These verses continue that mode of address because it exposes their habit .of altering and manipulating the divine book

Qur'an: And when they meet those who believe . . . and what they proclaim: The two conditional clauses, "when they meet those who believe" and "when they are alone one with another" are not in opposition to each other - as were

:the clauses in the verse

And when they meet those who believe, they say: “We believe”; and when they are alone with their Satans, they say: “Surely we are with you, we were only mocking (۲ :۱۴) .

Here the two clauses simply describe two instances of the Jews' transgressions and :ignorance

First: They indulge in hypocrisy, showing that they have accepted Islam, and trying in .this way to protect themselves from trouble, ridicule and even death

Second: They want to deceive Allah, forgetting that He is the Knower of the seen and .the unseen, Aware of what they conceal and what they proclaim

We may infer from the verses that the Jewish laity in Medina sometimes talked openly with the believers, telling them of some of the foretellings about the Prophet or .giving them some information that proved the truth of Islam and its Prophet

But their leaders used to admonish them for it, telling them that it was a thing revealed to them, it should not be disclosed to the believers, lest they argued with the Jews before the Lord – as though if the believers did not argue with them before God, !He would not know of it

Such thinking implies that Allah knew only the apparent, not the hidden and concealed things or thoughts. Allah refuted this foolish idea and said: “What! Do they not know ”?that Allah knows what they conceal and what they proclaim

It is our, and not God's, knowledge which is limited to the seen and does not comprehend the

unseen, because our perception depends on the senses which in their turn depend on body organs – equipped with nervous instruments, surrounded by space and time, .influenced by a hundred other material causes

This talk also throws light on the materialistic outlook of the Israelites. They were so steeped in that belief that they applied the human limitations to God too. They .thought that God was present and active inside the matter and prevailed over it

But that presence and that control and management were based on the same principles as a material cause brings out and controls a material effect. Such a belief was not a specialty of the Jews; it was and is held even by those followers of Islam .who believe in fundamentality of matter

For these people, God's life, knowledge, power, choice, will, decree, order and management have the same meanings as do their own life, knowledge etc. It is a disease for which there is no cure. And the signs and warnings can avail nothing to a .people who do not understand

Such views have made Islam a laughing-stock in the eyes of those who have no access to the true faith and correct Islamic knowledge. Those detractors say: The Muslims ascribe to their Prophet the saying, "Allah created Adam in His likeness"; and .these followers of the Prophet have created a god in the likeness of Adam

One group of the Muslims ascribes to its Lord all the qualities of the matter. Another group does not understand anything of

God's beautiful attributes; consequently it reduces all divine attributes to negatives. It says that the names and adjectives, which are used for both God and His creatures, have quite different meanings in both cases.

When we say, “God is Existent, Knowing, Powerful and Alive”, the words denote some divine qualities totally incomprehensible to us, completely different from the meanings they have when they are applied to a human being.

Therefore, it is necessary to reduce these words to their negatives. What the above sentence, for example, means is this: “God is not non-existent, not unaware, not powerless and not lifeless”.

Such explanation implies that they believe in that which they do not understand, worship that which they are uncertain about and invite others to believe in that which neither they nor anyone else knows anything about.

The word of truth is enough to dispel such falsehoods. The people have been admonished by the true religion to hold fast to the essence of reality and steer clear between the above-mentioned two extremes.

They should know that Allah is not like His creatures, nor is He a set of negative propositions. The true religion directs common people to believe that Allah is a thing, unlike other things; that He has knowledge, unlike our knowledge; power, unlike our power; and will, not produced by contemplation; that He talks, not with a mouth; and hears, not with ears.

As for the people of higher understanding, they must ponder on His signs and acquire deep knowledge of His religion. He has

:said

Say: `Are those who know and those who do not know alike?" Only those possessed .(of understanding shall bear in mind (۳۹:۹

The people of higher understanding are not equal to a common man in their knowledge of truth and religion; likewise, the two are not alike in their respective responsibilities. This, therefore, is the teaching of religion for both groups ?respectively; it is there for them to follow, would they do so

Qur'an: And there are among them illiterates who know not the Book but only lies and one who does not read or write) is related = (الأميّ "they do but conjecture; "al- Ummiyy .(mother = (الأم "to "al-umm

It is as though the excessive love of the mother prevented her from entrusting her child to a teacher to teach and train him; consequently he could learn only from his .(lie = (الأمنيه "is plural of "al-umniyyah (الأماني) "mother. "al-Amainiyy

The verse says that some of the Jews were literates who did read and write the book - but making alterations in it; and the rest were illiterates who knew nothing of the .book except the lies of the former group

= (الويل "Qur'an: Woe, then, to those who write the book with their hands . . . : "al-Wayl .(to sell = (الإشتراء " 'woe, disaster,, severe punishment, adversity, affliction) ;"al -ishtira

Qur'an: therefore, woe to them for what their hands have written . . . : The pronouns may refer either to all Jews or only to the interpolators among them. If

the former view is taken then the woe and condemnation would cover the illiterates .too

"Qur'an: Yea! whoever earns evil and his sins beset him on every side. . . "al-Khatī'ah translated here as "sins") actually refers to the psychical condition resulting = الخطیئه) from evil-doing. That is why the verse speaks first of his evil-doing and then of the effects of the sins besetting him on every side. When he is beset by his sins on every side, there should remain no opening for the guidance to reach him; he, therefore, will .go to Hell and abide there forever

Had there been an iota of faith in his heart, or some good traits like justice in his character, it would have been possible for the rays of guidance to penetrate to him. The overwhelming besetting of sins on every side, therefore, is possible in case of :polytheism, as Allah says

Surely Allah does not forgive that anything should be associated with Him, and ;(forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases (۴:۴۸

:and also in case of disbelief and denial of the divine signs, Allah says

And (as to) those who disbelieve in and belie Our signs, they are the inmates of the .(Fire, in it they shall abide (۲:۳۹

In short, the earning of evil and being beset by sins on all sides is a broad expression .covering all that would make one to abide in the Hell forever

:The two verses under discussion are almost similar to the verse

,Surely those who believe

and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabaeans, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good, they shall have their reward . . . (۲:۶۲).

Both show that the basis of salvation and eternal happiness is the true belief and good deeds. The only difference between the two sets of the verses is that the verse ۲:۶۲ shows that mere taking to oneself nomenclatures like the Muslim, the Jew etc. is of no use; while the verses under discussion show that mere claiming of salvation is of no worth at all.

Tradition

al-Baqir (a.s.) said about the words of Allah, And when they meet those who believe . . . : " Some of the Jews (who were not inimical to the Muslims and were not a party to the Jewish conspiracy against them), on meeting the Muslims, used to narrate what the Torah contained of the description of Muhammad (s.a.w.a.); so their elders forbade them to do so and said:

Do not inform them of what the Torah contains of the attributes of Muhammad ` (s.a.w.a.), lest they argue with you by that before your Lord.' Thereupon, this verse was revealed."(۱)

It is narrated from the fifth or the sixth Imam that he said about the words of Allah, Yea! whoever earns evil . . .. "If they deny the wilayah (الوِلایه = friendship, overlordship) of the Leader of the faithful, then they are the inmates of the Fire, in it they shall abide."(۲)

The author says: ash-Shaykh at-Tūsī has

۱- Majma `u'l-bayan

۲- al- Kafi

narrated in his al-Amalī a tradition of nearly the same theme. The two Tradition are based on the principle of the "flow" of the Qur'an and fit the verse on one of its best example. Allah has counted the love of, and submission to, the Prophet's family-members as a good deed, as He says:

Say: "I do not ask of you any recompense for it except the love for (my) near relatives; and whoever earns good, We give him more of good therein (۴۲:۲۳).

Also, the tradition may be taken as another explanation of the verse, as we shall describe in the Chapter ۶ (The Table) that "the good" means complying with the demands of the belief of monotheism. If so, then the tradition particularly mentions `Alī (a.s.) because he was the first of this ummah to open this door.

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۸۳-۸۸

point

(۸۳) وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ لاَ تَعْبُدُونَ إِلاَّ اللّهَ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَاناً وَذِي الْقُرْبَى وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَقُولُواْ لِلنَّاسِ حُسْناً وَأَقِيمُواْ الصَّلاَةَ وَآتُواْ الزَّكَاةَ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً مِّنكُمْ وَأَنتُم مِّعْرِضُونَ

(۸۴) وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ لاَ تَسْفِكُونَ دِمَاءكُمْ وَلاَ تُخْرِجُونَ أَنفُسَكُم مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ ثُمَّ أَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَنتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ

(۸۵) ثُمَّ أَنتُمْ هَـؤُلاء تَقْتُلُونَ أَنفُسَكُمْ وَتُخْرِجُونَ فَرِيقاً مِّنكُم مِّن دِيَارِهِمْ تَظَاهَرُونَ عَلَيْهِم بِالإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَإِن يَأتُوكُمْ أُسَارَى تُفَادُوهُمْ وَهُوَ مُحَرَّمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ إِخْرَاجُهُمْ أَفَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِبَعْضِ الْكِتَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ فَمَا جَزَاء مَن يَفْعَلُ ذَلِكَ مِنكُمْ إِلاَّ خِزْيٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَى أَشَدِّ الْعَذَابِ وَمَا اللّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

(۸۶) أُولَـئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرَوُاْ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا بِالآَخِرَةِ فَلاَ يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَلاَ هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ

(۸۷) وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ

وَقَفَّيْنَا مِن بَعْدِهِ بِالرُّسُلِ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ أَفَكُلَّمَا جَاءكُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لاَ تَهْوَى أَنفُسُكُمُ اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ فَفَرِيقاً كَذَّبْتُمْ وَفَرِيقاً تَقْتُلُونَ

(۸۸) وَقَالُواْ قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ بَل لَّعَنَهُمُ اللَّه بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَقَلِيلاً مَّا يُؤْمِنُونَ

And when We made a covenant with the Children of Israel: "You shall not worship (any) but Allah and (you shall do) good to (your) parents, and to the near of kin and to the orphans and the needy, and speak to men good (words) and keep up prayer and pay the zakat. " Then you turned back except a few of you and (now too) you turn .(aside (۸۳

And when We made a covenant with you: "You shall not shed your blood and you shall not turn your people out of your cities;" then you gave a promise while you witnessed .((۸۴

Yet you it is who slay your people and turn a party from among you out of their homes, backing each other up against them unlawfully and exceeding the limits; and if they should come to you as captives, you would ransom them - while their very turning out was unlawful for you. Do you then believe in a part of the Book and disbelieve in the other? What then is the reward of such among you as do this but disgrace in the life of this world, and on the Day of Resurrection they shall be sent back to the most grievous chastisement, and Allah is not at all heedless of what you do

.(۸۵)

These are they who have bought the life of this world for the hereafter, so their .(chastisement shall not be lightened nor shall they be helped (۸۶

And most certainly We gave Musa the Book and We sent apostles after him one after another; and We gave `Isa, the son of Maryam, clear evidence and strengthened him with the holy spirit. What! whenever then an apostle came to you with that which your souls did not desire, you were insolent, so you called some (of them) liars and some .(you slew (۸۷

And they say: "Our hearts are covered." Nay, Allah has cursed them on account of .(their unbelief- so little it is that they believe (۸۸

Commentary

Qur'an: And when We made a covenant with the Children of Israel: "You shall not worship (any) but Allah. . . ": To begin with, the verse refers to the Children of Israel in ,third person, and then ends by addressing them in second person

Then you turned back . . . " The first sentence mentions making a covenant with them" - which must naturally be in words - then describes that covenant; this in its turn begins with a declarative sentence, "You shall not worship (any) but Allah", and ends ". . . up with some imperative ones, "and speak to men good words

When the stories of the Israelites began, they were addressed in second person, because the verses contained a lot of admonition and reprimand; it continued to the ,story of the Cow when

because of demands of eloquence, it was changed to third person. Consequently, this verse too began with third person, but when time came to quote the verbal covenant, .the style reverted to the second person

You shall not worship (any) but Allah": It is a prohibition in the form of information." This style shows the utmost importance attached to the ban by the speaker - it is as though the speaker has no doubt whatsoever that the order shall be complied with, .and that, in this case, the servants will not dare to go near idolatory

The same style is continued in the next clause, "and (you shall do) good to (your) ".parents, and to the near of kin and to the orphans and the needy

The change over to second person, although resorted to for the purpose of quoting the covenant, has put the speech back to the original style and has linked the last clauses of the covenant to the fresh admonitary ones: "and keep up prayer and pay "... the zakat. Then you turned back

Qur'an: and (you shall do) good to (your) parents . . .: As translated here, it is a declarative sentence with the sense of imperative. It may also be translated as an imperative sentence: "and (do) good . . ." The verse gives in descending order of .importance, the list of those whom one should do good to

The parents are the root of man's existence, and nearest of all to him. Then come the

near of kin. Going outside the circle of relatives, the orphans are most deserving of kindness and beneficence, because in their small age they are deprived of their father .- their guardian, protector and bread-earner. Other needy persons come after them

orphan) is he whose father has died. = اليتيم) "Qur'an: "And to the orphans": "al-Yatīm The word is not used for him who has lost his mother. Also, it is said that a human child is called "orphan" if his father dies, but in animals, the adjective is used for one whose .mother dies

needy, = المسكين) is plural of al-miskīn (المساكين) "Qur'an: "And the needy": "al-Masakīn .(impoverished, destitue, lowly

beauty, excellence) is an =حُسناً) "Qur'an: "and speak to men good (words)": "Husnan infinitive verb, used for adjective (beautiful, excellent, good) to give emphasis. Some .(beautiful, excellent, good = حَسَناً) reciters have recited it hasanan

However, the sentence enjoins them to speak nicely to the people; it is an indirect way of ordering them to maintain good social relations to behave with people nicely, gently and good-manneredly - no matter whether the opposite party is a believer or .an unbeliever

It cannot be said to be abrogated by the verse of fighting, because the two verses are not contradictory to each other; the place and time of social contact is other than the place and time of fighting. For example, using hard words when admonishing a child .to correct his behaviour is not contrary to maintaining good social relation

Qur'an: "You shall not shed your

blood. . . ": This too is a prohibitory order, in the form of an information - the same to = السّفک) "style which was used in, "You shall not worship (any) but Allah". "as-safk .(shed blood

to help each other). = التظاهر) "Qur'an: backing each other up against them: "at-Tazahur back) as though the helper = الظهر) helper); it is derived from az-zahr = الظهير) Az-Zahīr .strengthens the back of the helped one

Qur'an: while their very turning away was unlawful for you: Its literal translation will be, `while it was unlawful for you their very turning out.' The pronoun "it" is not related here to any previously mentioned noun etc., it is a pronoun used to begin a ,sentence. In the verse

,(Say: "He, Allah is one" (۱۱۲:۱

.the pronoun "He" has the same grammatical significance

Qur'an: Do you believe in a part of the Book . . . : Why should you follow the rule of paying ransom for them and disobey the prohibition of turning them out? Are not both rules in the same book? Do you believe in a part of the Book and disbelieve in the ?other

to = التقفیه) "Qur'an: And We sent apostles after him one after another: "at -Taqfiyah .(send someone after someone else

Qur'an: and We gave Isa son of Maryam, clear evidence: This subject will be dealt .(with in Chapter ۳, (The Family of ` Imran

is plural of al-aghlaf. (الغُلف) " Qur'an: And they say: "Our hearts are covered": al-Ghulf = الغلاف) It is derived from ghilaf

cover). They say: Our hearts are protected under various covers and veils - your call cannot reach our hearts. The sentence has the same import as the verse:

And they say: "Our hearts are under coverings from that to which you call us (۴۱:۵).

Tradition

Abu Ja'far (a.s.) said about the words of Allah, and speak to men good (words): "Speak to men the best of that which you would like to be said about yourself."(۱)

As-Sadiq (a.s.) said about this verse: "Speak to men, and do not speak but good until you know what it is.

al-Baqir (a.s.) said: "Speak to men the best, of that which you would like to be said" about yourself; for certainly Allah, Mighty and Great is He, dislikes an abuser, curler, speaker of evil against the believers, indecent, shameless (and) begger, and He loves the modest, mild-tempered, chaste (and) moderate."(۲)

The author says: A tradition, similar to the first one, has been narrated in al-Kafī from as-Sadiq (a.s.) with another chain of narrators; and similarly in al-`Ayyashī.

Another tradition, like the second one has been written from the same Imam in al-Kafī; and one like the third is narrated from al-Baqir (a.s.) in al -`Ayyashī. Apparently these meanings of the "good word" have been inferred from general usage.

As-Sadiq (a.s) said: "Verily Allah sent Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) with five swords: So (there is) a sword against a dhimmī (الذِمـِّیّ = free non-Muslim subject of an Islamic country). Allah said: and speak to men good (words); it was revealed about the dhimmīs,

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۱- al-Kafi

۲- Ma`ani 'l-akhbar

,then it was abrogated by another verse

(Fight those who do not believe in Allah. . . (٩:٢٩)(١)

The author says: In this tradition the Imam has taken the “speech” to mean behaviour. We say: Do not speak to him but good; what we mean is: Do not deal with him but in a good and decent manner. This meaning will apply only if we take the word, “abrogated” in its terminological sense. But it may also be taken in its literal sense (as we shall explain under the verse:

;(Whatever signs We abrogate or cause to be forgotten (٢:١٠۶

and in that case this verse will not be in conflict with that of the fighting. It should be pointed out that such uses of words in their literal meanings (as against their terminological ones) are not infrequent in the Tradition of the Imams.

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ٨٩-٩٣

point

(٨٩) وَلَمَّا جَاءهُمْ كِتَابٌ مِّنْ عِندِ اللّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ وَكَانُواْ مِن قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ فَلَمَّا جَاءهُم مَّا عَرَفُواْ كَفَرُواْ بِهِ فَلَعْنَةُ اللَّه عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ

(٩٠) بِئْسَمَا اشْتَرَوْاْ بِهِ أَنفُسَهُمْ أَن يَكْفُرُواْ بِمَا أنَزَلَ اللّهُ بَغْياً أَن يُنَزِّلُ اللّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِ عَلَى مَن يَشَاء مِنْ عِبَادِهِ فَبَآؤُواْ بِغَضَبٍ عَلَى غَضَبٍ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ

(٩١) وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُواْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللّهُ قَالُواْ نُؤْمِنُ بِمَآ أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَيَكْفُرونَ بِمَا وَرَاءهُ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقاً لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ قُلْ فَلِمَ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنبِيَاء اللّهِ مِن قَبْلُ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

(٩٢) وَلَقَدْ جَاءكُم مُّوسَى بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِن بَعْدِهِ وَأَنتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ

(٩٣) وَأُشْرِبُواْ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْعِجْلَ بِكُفْرِهِمْ قُلْ بِئْسَمَا يَأْمُرُكُم بِهِ إِيمَانُكُمْ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

And

when there came to them a Book from Allah verifying that which they have, and aforetime they used to pray for victory against those who disbelieved, but when there came to them that which they did recognize, they disbelieved in him; so Allah's curse .(is on the unbelievers (٨٩

Evil is that for which they sold their souls - that they should deny what Allah has revealed, out of envy that Allah should send down of His grace on whomsoever of His servants He pleases; so they returned with wrath upon wrath, and there is a dis... .(graceful punishment for the unbelievers (٩٠

And when it is said to them, "Believe in what Allah has revealed," they say: "We believe in that which was revealed to us;" and they deny what is besides that, while it is the truth verifying that which they have. Say: "Why then did you kill Allah's prophets .(before if you were indeed believers?" (٩١

And most certainly Musa came to you with clear evidence, then you took the calf (for a .(god) in his absence and you were unjust (٩٢

And (remember) when We made a covenant with you and raised the mountain over you: "Take hold of what We have given you with firmness and listen (to Our words)". They said: "We hear and disobey." And they were made to imbibe (the love of) the calf into their hearts on account of their unbelief. Say: "Evil is that which your belief bids .(you if you are believers" (٩٣

Commentary

Qur'an: And

when there came to them a Book: The context shows that "a Book" refers to the .Qur'an

Qur'an: and aforetime they used to pray for victory against those who disbelieved: It appears that whenever the pagans of Arabia clashed with the Jews, the latter prayed for victory by the right of the Prophet, and by his prophethood and emigration; and that this was their usual custom before the advent of the Prophet, so much so that ."even the pagans knew it of them. It all is implied in the word, "they used to

Qur'an: but when there came to them that which they did recognize: They knew that Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was the awaited Prophet, because all the attributes and particulars mentioned in their books fitted on him perfectly. And yet they denied his .truth

out of envy) is in = (بغياً) " Qur'an: Evil is that for which they sold their souls. . .: "Baghyan accusative case, explaining the reason why they disbelieved in Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) .even after recognizing him

What they did was "out of envy", "that Allah should send down of His grace on whomsoever of His servants He pleases" was the object of their envy. "So they re... turned with wrath upon wrath", that is, they returned doubly enraged. It may also mean that they invited double wrath of Allah upon themselves - the first because they .disbelieved in Torah and the second because they disbelieved in the Qur'an

The verse says that they were partisans of the Prophet long before he was

born; they prayed to Allah for victory by his name and his Book. When the Prophet was sent and the Qur'an was revealed, they very well recognized that he was the Prophet in whose name they used to pray for victory, and whose coming they awaited. But they were overwhelmed by envy and arrogance.

No sooner did the Prophet begin his call then they denied his truth, and forgot all that they used to tell about the awaited prophet. It was not surprising as they had earlier disbelieved in Torah too. Thus they committed disbelief after disbelief, and invited the wrath of Allah upon themselves, not once but twice.

Qur'an: and they deny what is besides that: That is, they claim that they do not believe in any book other than Torah; but the fact is that they do not believe even in Torah.

Qur'an: Say: "Why then did you kill Allah's prophets. . . ": The conjunctive, "then", serves to relate this question to their claim, "We believe in that which was revealed to us". If this claim of yours is correct then why did you kill the prophets of Allah? And why did you disbelieve in Musa by taking the calf for a god? And why did you say, "We hear and disobey", when We took a promise from you and lifted the mountain over you?

Qur'an: and they were made to imbibe (the love of) the calf into their hearts: "al-Ishrab" (الإشراب = to make to imbibe, to make to drink).

Instead of saying `the love of the calf', the verse says, “to imbibe the calf”, for emphasis, as though they had drunk the calf itself into their hearts. The sentence thus contains two metaphors - “the calf” for the love of the calf, and imbibing into hearts .for loving

Qur’an: Say: “Evil is that which your belief bids you. . . ”: It is a derisive expression ridiculing them for their killings of the prophets, their disbelief in Musa and their arrogance in committing sin after sin and then claiming that they were the true ?believers. The verse tauntingly asks them: Is this what your belief bids you

Tradition

As-Sadiq (a.s.) explained the verse, and when there came to them a Book from Allah verifying that which they have. . ., in this way: “The Jews found in their books that Muhammad (s.a.w.a.), the Messenger of Allah, would migrate and settle between `Ayr and Uhud. So, they went out looking for that place. They passed by a mountain called :Hadad(۱); and they said

Hadad -and Uhud are the same'. So they dispersed nearby; some of them settled at` Tayma', and some others at Fadak and yet others at Khaybar. Those at Tayma' once desired (to see) some of their brethren (at another place). A Bedouin from (the tribe .(of) Qays passed by them and they hired (his camels

He told them: `I shall take you from between `Ayr and Uhud.' They told him: `When you pass between the two, tell us.' When they reached the

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In the printed copy of at-Tafsīr of al-`Ayyashī (vol. ۱, p.۴۹) and what has been - ۱ quoted from him in al-Bihar (vol. ۱۵, p.۲۲۶), al-Burhan (vol.۱, p.۱۲۸) and Majma'u '۱-bayAn (vol. ۱, p.۱۵۸) the name has appeared as Hadad. But we could not find such a name in geographical dictionaries. Perhaps it is a corruption of Hadad which is a mountain overlooking Tayma'; (see Makamu '۱-bayann, vol. ۲, p. ۲۲۹; al -Qamūs, vol. (.۱, p. ۲۸۷ and Taju '۱-'arūs, vol. ۲, p. ۳۳۳) or it may be another reading of Hadad.(ed

land of Medina, he said: `That is `Ayr and this is Uhud.' They descended from his :camels and said to him

We have now found (the place of) our desire; now we do not need your camels, you` may go wherever you wish.' Then they wrote to their brethren at Fadak and Khaybar: '.`We have found the place, come therefore to us

They wrote in reply: `Now we have settled in this place, and have acquired properties; and we are so near to you. Therefore, when it will happen (i.e., when the '.Prophet will come to Medina), we shall rush to you

Those Jews acquired properties in the land of Medina. When their wealth increased, its news came to the ears of Tubba'(١) and he attacked them. They fortified themselves and he laid siege to them. (And they used to take pity on the weekly soldiers of Tubba` and throw dates and barley to them at night. This came to the (notice of Tubba` and he softened towards them.(٢)

He assured them of their safety and they came down to him. He told them: `I do like this place of yours and I am inclined to settle down here.' They said: `It is not for you. It is the migration place of a prophet; and no one may settle down here until that '.happens

Thereupon he said: `Then I am leaving among you some of the members of my clan, so that when it happens they shall help and assist him.' Thus he left behind

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١- الـتُّـبّـع (at -Tubba`) was the title of the kings of Yemen.
٢- The sentences in parenthesis are not in al-Mīzan. They have been added from the quotation of al-`Ayyashī, given in Bīharu '١-anwar, vol. ١٥, p.٢٢۶. (m)

.the two tribes you see today, the Aws and the Khazraj

When these two (tribes) increased in number, they used to grab the properties of the Jews. At that time, the Jews used to warn them: `Oh! When Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) is '.sent (by Allah) we shall certainly turn you out from our town and properties

But when Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was sent as Prophet, it was the Helpers (the Aws and the Khazraj) who believed in him and the very Jews denied him! This is the meaning of ,the words of Allah

(and aforetime they used to pray for victory against those who disbelieved. . . "(۱)

Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Hatim and Abū Na'aym (in hisDala'ilu 'n-nubuwwah) have narrated from Ibn `Abbas that he said: "The Jews used to pray for victory against the Aws and the Khazraj by the right of the Messenger of Allah, before .he was sent as prophet

However, when Allah raised him from the Arabs, the same Jews disbelieved in him and denied what they used to say about him. Mu'adh ibn Jabal, Bishr ibn Bara' ibn :Ma'rūr and Dawūd ibn Salamah told them

O Jews! Fear Allah and accept Islam; because it was you who used to pray for` victory against us by the right of Muhammad, while we were polytheists, and you '.used to tell us that he would (soon) be sent, describing to us his attributes

Salam ibn Mushkīm, one of the tribe of Banū an-Nadīr, said to them: `He has not brought to us

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۱- Al-`Ayyashī

anything we know; and he is not the prophet we were telling you about.' Then Allah :(sent down (the verse

(And when there came to them a Book from Allah . . . ' "(١)`

Abu Nu'aym has narrated in his Dala'ilu 'n-Nubuwwah from the chains of `Ata' and ad-Dahhak, from Ibn `Abbas that he said: "The Jews of Banū Qurayzah and Banū an-Nadīr, before Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was sent as prophet, used to pray to Allah for :victory, invoking Him against the disbelievers and saying

O Allah! We seek Thy help, by the right of the untaught prophet, to let us triumph` over them.' And they were given victory. But when there came to them that which they did recognize (i.e., Muhammad - s.a.w.a.), and actually they had no doubt (whatsoever about him, they disbelieved in, and denied him.(٢

.The author says: Similar Tradition have been narrated by various other chains also

A commentator, after pointing to the last mentioned Tradition and others like them, says: "These Tradition - weak as their narrators are and incompatible as they are with the narrated Tradition - are anomalous in their meaning too, because they maintain that the prayer for victory was made `by the person of the Prophet' or, as some Tradition say, `by the right of the Prophet'; and such a prayer is against the sharī`ah; and no one has any right on Allah. How could prayer be offered with the help of such a ?non-existent right

Reply: This objection results from not understanding the meaning of

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ad-Durru '١-manthūr -١

ad-Durru 'l-manthūr -٢

right" and oath. Oath is used to join and bind a proposition, order, request or" exclamation to an honourable and sublime thing - if that proposition etc. is wrong, the honour and sublimity of the thing bound to it, is tarnished and damaged.

When you say, "By my life, Zayd is standing", you have bound the honour of your life to the truth of your statement; if that statement be wrong, your life would loose its honour. When you say, "By my life, I shall do this work", or "I entreat you, by my life, to do this work", you have, in the same way, put the honour of your life at stake for that work; if you did not do it, or if the second party did not heed to your entreaty, your life would loose its honour, its dignity. Two things emerge from this explanation:

First: Oath is the strongest method of emphasizing a talk, as the scholars of literature have confirmed.

Second: The thing by which one swears, must be more honourable and more important than the proposition etc. which it is related to; because a proposition cannot be emphasized with the help of a less important thing. Allah has sworn, in His Book, by His own name and attributes.

For example, So, by your Lord,

We would most certainly question them all (۱۵:۹۲).

Also, He quotes others swearing by His name and attributes:

By Allah, our Lord . . . (۶:۲۳);

Then by Thy Might I will surely make them live an evil life

.(۳۸:۸۲)

But He has also sworn by His Prophet, His angels and His books, as well as by His creatures like the heaven, the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, the night, the day, .the mountains, the rivers, the towns, the man, the tree, the fig and the olive

It could not be possible unless these things had a real dignity of their own bestowed on them by Allah; every such thing must have an attribute reflecting one of the divine attributes, or an activity related to the divine sublimity and every dignity and honour .emanates from Him

Now, what objection can be raised against a suppliant, if he prays to Allah for something entreating Him by one of the above-mentioned things - considering the fact that Allah Himself has sworn by those things and has given them a sublimity and ?dignity

Why an exception should be made in case of the Apostle of Allah only? Is it not an affront to the Prophet to remove him from this common way of showing respect? By my life, Muhammad, the Apostle of Allah (s. a. w. a.) is not less honourable in the eyes of Allah than an Iraqi fig or a Syrian olive! These people forget that Allah Himself has :sworn by His Prophet

.(By your life! They were blindly wandering on in their intoxication (۱۵:۷۲

Now we should have a look at the "right". Right, as opposed to wrong, means a factual ,thing, existing outside imagination, like the earth and the man; in short

every real and substantial thing, as opposed to illusory and imaginary ones. Monetory and other social rights come within this category because they are firmly established .by the society

The Qur'an has nullified all the rights claimed by man, except that which is laid down and confirmed by Allah - in creation as well as in legislation. Right in the legislative and social spheres is that which Allah Himself has established, like the monetary rights, .the rights of the brothers and the rights of the parents etc

It is necessary to mention here that no one can lay down a right against Allah; no one can make it incumbent upon Allah to do or give something. But it is possible for Allah to make it incumbent upon Himself to do something, or to give someone something, all in the sphere of legislation. Then that "someone" shall have a right on Allah which Allah .Himself has established

:For example, Allah says

;(even so (now) it is a right on Us(that) We deliver the believers (۱۰:۱۰۳

And certainly Our word has already gone forth in respect of Our servants, the apostles: Most surely they shall be assisted ones, and most surely Our host alone shall (be the victorious ones (۳۷:۱۷۱-۱۷۳

The assistance, promised here, is general and unconditional, not restricted by any proviso. Getting deliverance is the right of the believers on Allah, and getting assistance is, in the same way, the right of the apostles. By establishing this right on Himself for the apostles, Allah has enhanced

.their dignity and honour

And there is nothing to prevent a suppliant from entreating Allah to help and deliver him from his difficulties, by the right of His apostle or apostles. Allah Himself has laid down that right and He Himself swears by every honourable thing, showing us that .such oaths and adjurations are in fact liked by Him

In short, there is no hitch in entreating Allah by His Apostle or by the right of His Apostle. The same applies to entreating Him by His friends, or by the right of His friends. He has established a right for them on Himself that He will surely assist them .in the path of happiness, with every related assistance

The claim that "no one has any right on Allah" is just nonsense. Of course, no one can lay down a right for himself on Allah; no one can make it incumbent on Allah to do some thing. But a suppliant does not pray to Allah by a right forced on Allah by someone else; he pleads to Him by a right which He Himself has established pledging .His Own word; and His Promise is never broken

Volume ۲

point

Suratul Baqarah (۲), from Verse ۹۴ to Verse ۱۸۲The second volume of the renowned commentary on the Holy Qur'an written by one of its greatest modern commentators. This volume contains exegesis of Suratul Baqarah (۲) from verse ۹۴ to verse ۱۸۲. .Translated by Sayyid Sa'eed Akhtar Rizvi

Foreword

al-'Allamah as-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn at-Tabataba'i (۱۳۲۱/۱۹۰۴ - ۱۴۰۲/۱۹۸۱) - may Allah have mercy upon him - was a famous scholar, thinker and the most celebrated con-temporary Islamic philosopher. We have introduced him briefly in the first .volume of the English translation of al-Mizan

al-'Allamah at-Tabataba'i is well-known for a number of his works of which the most important is his great exegesis al Mizan fi Tafsiri 'l-Qur'an which is rightly counted as the fundamental pillar of scholarly work which the 'Allamah has achieved in the .Islamic world

We felt the necessity of publishing an exegesis of the Holy Qur'an in English. After a thorough consultation, we came to choose al-Mizan because we found that it contained in itself, to a considerable extent, the points which should necessarily be expounded in a perfect exegesis of the Holy Qur'an and the points which appeal to the .mind of the contemporary Muslim reader

Therefore, we proposed to al-tistadh al-'Allamah as-Sayyid Sa'id Akhtar ar-Radawi to undertake this task because we were familiar with

his intellectual ability to understand the Arabic text of al-Mizan and his literary capability in expression and translation. So we relied on him for this work and consider him responsible for the English translation as al-'Allamah at-Tabataba'i was .responsible for the Arabic text of al-Mizan and its discussions

We have now undertaken the publication of the second volume of the English translation of al-Mizan. This volume corresponds with the second half of the first volume of the Arabic text. With the help of Allah, the Exalted, we hope to provide the .complete translation and publication of this voluminous work

In the first volume, the reader will find two more appendixes included apart from the two which are to appear in all volumes of the English translation of al-Mizan: One for .the authors and the other for the books cited throughout this work

We implore upon Allah to effect our work purely for His pleasure, and to help us to complete this work which we have started. May Allah guide us in this step which we .have taken and in the future steps, for He is the best Master and the best Helper

World Organization For Islamic Services

(Board of Writing, Translation and Publication)

۲۴/۳/۱۹۸۴ ۲۰/۶/۱۴۰۴

.Tehran - IRAN

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۹۴ – ۹۹

point

(۹۴) قُلۡ إِن كَانَتۡ لَكُمُ ٱلدَّارُ ٱلۡأَخِرَةُ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ خَالِصَةً مِّن دُونِ ٱلنَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوُاْ ٱلۡمَوۡتَ إِن كُنتُمۡ صَـٰدِقِينَ

(۹۵) وَلَن يَتَمَنَّوۡهُ أَبَدَۢا بِمَا قَدَّمَتۡ أَيۡدِيهِمۡ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ عَلِيمُۢ بِٱلظَّـٰلِمِينَ

(۹۶) وَلَتَجِدَنَّهُمۡ أَحۡرَصَ ٱلنَّاسِ عَلَىٰ حَيَوٰةٍ وَمِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَشۡرَكُواْ ۚ يَوَدُّ أَحَدُهُمۡ لَوۡ يُعَمَّرُ أَلۡفَ سَنَةٍ وَمَا هُوَ بِمُزَحۡزِحِهِۦ مِنَ ٱلۡعَذَابِ
أَن يُعَمَّرَ ۗ

وَ٭للَّهُ بَصِيرٌۢ بِمَا يَعمَلُونَ

(٩٧) قُلۡ مَن كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِّجِبرِيلَ فَإِنَّهُۥ نَزَّلَهُۥ عَلَىٰ قَلبِكَ بِإِذۡنِ ٭للَّهِ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَينَ يَدَيهِ وَهُدًى وَبُشرَىٰ لِلمُؤۡمِنِينَ

(٩٨) مَن كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِّلَّهِ وَمَلَـٰٓئِكَتِهِۦ وَرُسُلِهِۦ وَجِبرِيلَ وَمِيكَالَ فَإِنَّ ٭للَّهَ عَدُوٌّ لِّلكَـٰفِرِينَ

(٩٩) وَلَقَدۡ أَنزَلنَا إِلَيكَ ءَايَـٰتِۭ بَيِّنَـٰتٍ وَمَا يَكفُرُ بِهَا إِلَّا ٭لفَـٰسِقُونَ

Say: “If the future abode with Allah is purely for you to the exclusion of the people then invoke death if you are truthful” (٩٤).

And they will never invoke it on account of what their hands have sent before, and Allah knows the unjust ones (٩٥).

And you will most certainly find them the greediest of men for life, and (greedier) than even those who are polytheists; every one of them loves that he should be granted a life of a thousand years, and his being granted a long life will in no way remove him further off from the chastisement, and Allah sees what they do (٩٦).

Say: “Whoever is the enemy of Gabriel – for surely he revealed it to your heart by Allah's Command, verifying that which is before it, and guidance and good news for the believers (٩٧).

Whoever is the enemy of Allah and His angels and His apostles and Gabriel and Michael – so surely Allah is the enemy of the unbelievers” (٩٨).

And certainly We have revealed to you clear signs, and none disbelieve in them except the transgressors (٩٩).

Commentary

Qur’an: Say: “If the future abode… ”: The Jews claimed, “Fire shall not touch us but for a few days” (٢:٨٠). When they were

:told to believe in what Allah had revealed, they declared

.(We believe in that which was revealed to us" (۲:۹۱"

All this implied that only they would be saved on the Day of Resurrection to the exclusion of all the others; that their deliverance and happiness in the next world would be unmarred by any unpleasant experience as the Fire shall not touch them but for a few days - equal in number to the day they worshipped the calf. To remove that self-delusion and conceit, Allah put a challenge to them, to show them their true face, .to make them realize that their claims were without any substance

He (Allah) told His Apostle to say to them: "If the future abode... is for you..." The "future abode" points to the felicity and happiness of that abode; the owner of a house arranges and manages it in the best possible way, and decorates it according to his taste and liking "with Allah", that is, firmly established with Allah, by His order :and His permission; the phrase has the same import here as in the verse

.(Surely the religion with Allah is Islam (۳:۱۹

purely", that is, unmixed with punishment or humiliation - utmost that you think" possible is a punishment of just a few days. "to the exclusion of the people", because you presume that all religions, except your own, are false. If you really think so, "then ."invoke death if you are truthful

:This challenge is similar to the one given in verse

Say: "O you

who are Jews, if you think that you are the friends of Allah to the exclusion of other .(people, then invoke death if you are truthful" (۶۲:۶

The argument is very clear about which nobody can have any doubt whatsoever. Any man (nay! even an animal having a limited perception and sensitivity), if given total freedom to choose between comfort and discomfort, will at once opt for the comfort, .without any hesitation, without any contemplation

Put before him a life polluted with trouble and turmoil and another clean and pure, and tell him to take hold of any one; naturally, and without any doubt, he will grab at the pure one. If for any reason he is prevented from the life of his choice, he will .always dream of it, and will remain looking for any opportunity to lay his hands upon it

If the Jews are truthful in their claim that the other world's pure happiness belongs to them to the exclusion of others, then they must yearn for it with their hearts, words .and deeds

And they will never invoke it on account of what their hands have sent before", for" example, the killings of the prophets, the disbelief in Musa (a.s.) and breaking of the ."covenants, "and Allah knows the unjust ones

Qur'an: on account of what their hands have sent before: It is a metaphorical reference to the "deeds". Most of the external deeds are done by hands; then the finished product is sent to the one who wants it or

.may benefit from it

The sentence has two allegorical allusions: it counts every deed as having been done by hands; and it ascribes the action of "sending" to the hands while in fact it is the man .who sends his deeds before

Actions of a man, and especially those done regularly, are a clear mirror of his unconscious and sub-conscious personality. Evil deeds expose the evil nature of the doer - and such a nature does not like meeting its Lord or staying in the abode of His .friends

Qur'an: And you will most certainly find them the greediest of men for life: It is an explanation of the divine word, "And they will never invoke it..." They do not yearn for death because they are greediest of all men for the life of this world. It is this greed and avid craving to remain in this world which prevents them from looking forward to .the next abode

The word, "life", is used in this verse as a common noun - it is to show how :insignificant and trifling this life is; Allah has said

And this life of the world is nothing but a sport and a play, and as for the next abode, .(that most surely is life - did they but know (۲۹:۶۴

Qur'an: and (greedier) that even those who are polytheists: Apparently the conjunctive, "and", joins this clause to the word, "men", that is, you will find them .greedier than even the polytheists for life

Qur'an: and his being granted a long life

will in no way remove him further off from the chastisement: The verse's literal translation: and it is not a remover of him from the chastisement his being granted a long life.

"ma" (ما = not, no, particle of negation); the pronoun "it" is that of sha'n(1) and qissah (ضَميرُ الشّأن و القصّه); "his being granted a long life" is the subject preceded by the predicate, that is, "is not a remover of him..."

The sentence may also be syntactically analysed in another way: the pronoun, "it", may refer to the love each of them had of being granted a life of a thousand years. It would accordingly mean that that love of theirs would not ward off the Divine Chastisement from them; in this case, the clause, "his being granted a long life" will be a description of that love.

Anyhow, what the verse says is this: They shall never invoke the death, and I swear that you will most certainly find them the greediest of men for this base and insignificant life which prevents them from the happy and good life of the next abode; you will find them greedier than even the polytheists for this life, although the latter do not believe in the Resurrection and the Day of Judgment, and consequently their love for this life should be unparalleled; every one of them loves that he should be granted the longest life, but even the longest life cannot remove him further off from the Divine Chastisement, because life, no

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١ - Sha'n (ضَميرُ الشّأن) is a personal pronoun (third person, masculine) which is used to begin a sentence. That of feminine gender is called the pronoun of qissah (ضَمير القصّه). The nearest thing to it in the English grammer is the indefinite demonstrative pronoun. (tr.)

.matter how long it is, is limited and has to come to an end

Qur’an: every one of them loves that he should be granted a life of a thousand years: that is, the longest life. “a thousand” is used to denote numerousness. In Arabic, it is the highest de-nomination which is described by a single word. Higher denominations are shown by repetition and combination, for example, ten thousand, a hundred .(thousand, a thousand thousand (i.e., a million

is one of the beautiful names of (البَصيرُ) ”Qur’an: And Allah sees what you do: “al-Basir Allah; it signifies that although He does not have a body or an eye, He is fully cognizant of all things which we perceive with our eyes. It shows a facet of the name, .(the Knowing = العَليْمُ) al-'Alim

Qur’an: Say: “Whoever is the enemy of Gabriel - for surely he revealed it to your heart by Allah's Command: Apparently the verse was revealed as a reply to something the Jews had said - they arrogantly refused to believe in what was revealed to the Apostle of Allah (S), on the pretext that they were enemies of Gabriel who had the .(charge of bringing the revelation to Muhammad (S

Allah replied to them in two verses - concerning the Qur'an and Gabriel both. Also the traditions giving the background of the verses confirm it. The verses contain four .replies to their arrogance in denial of the Qur'an

First: Gabriel has revealed the Qur'an to your heart by Allah's Command, not

by his own wish. Therefore, even if they feel enmity towards Gabriel, it should not .prevent them from believing in a revelation sent down by Allah's Command

Second: The Qur'an verifies the Divine Book which was revealed before it and which they have in their hands. How can they believe in a book and deny another which ?verifies it

.Third: The Qur'an is a guidance for those who believe in it

Fourth: It is also a good news for the believers. How can a sane person turn his face away from guidance and good news, even if it is brought to him by a supposed enemy ?of his

So far as their professed enmity towards Gabriel was concerned, they were replied as :follows

Gabriel is one of the angels of Allah; he has no authority except to follow and obey the Divine Command – just like Michael and other angels. They are honoured servants of .Allah; they do not disobey His command, and they do as they are told

Likewise, the apostles of Allah have no authority except by Allah and from Allah. To have enmity towards them, to harbour hatred for them is enmity and hatred towards Allah Himself. Therefore, whoever is the enemy of Allah and His angels and His .apostles and Gabriel and Michael, so surely Allah is his enemy

.All these replies are clearly given in these two verses

Qur'an: for surely he revealed it to your heart by Allah's Command: Apparently, it should have been "to my heart"; instead, it says, "to your

heart". The pronoun has been changed from the first to the second person to draw :attention to an important factor

So far as the revelation of the Qur'an is concerned, neither Gabriel has any choice or authority of his own in bringing it down (he is subject to the Divine command, which he faith-fully carries out) nor the Apostle of Allah (s. a.w. a.) has any choice or authority of his own in receiving it and conveying it to his ummah; his heart is the receptacle of revelation, on which he has no control at all and which he is bound to convey to his .people

The Jews have been mentioned in these verses sometimes in the second person, and sometimes in the third. Their admonition and condemnation has continued for a long time; and the Speaker wants to show that they do not deserve the honour of being .addressed by Him

That is why He frequently changes the styles, again and again going from the second to the third person pronouns. The audience gets the impression that the Speaker does not like to speak to them - because of their heedlessness and depravity, but at the same time does not like to leave them as they are without pronouncing His .judgment against them

Qur'an: the enemy of the unbelievers: Instead of saying, "their enemy", the verse uses the word, "enemy of the unbelievers"; it serves to show also the reason of that enmity. Allah is their enemy, because they are unbelievers, and Allah

.is the enemy of the unbelievers

Qur'an: and none disbelieve in them except the transgressors: It explains the cause of their disbelief; they disbelieve because they are transgressors. Or, may be the definite article "the", in "the transgressors" refers to the group mentioned in the beginning of the chapter:

But He does not cause to err by it (any) except the transgressors, who break the covenant of Allah after its confirmation... (۲:۲۶-۲۷)

As for Gabriel and how he brought the revelation to the heart of the Apostle of Allah (s. a.w. a.), we shall explain it, God willing, in another place; the same applies to Michael and other angels.

Traditions

Ibn "Abbas explained the reason of the revelation of the verse, Say: "Whoever is the enemy of Gabriel...", in these words: "When the Prophet came to Medina, Ibn Suriya and some Jews of Fadak asked him (some questions). They said: 'O Muhammad! How do you sleep? Because we have been told about the sleep of the Prophet who would come in the last days?'

He said: 'My eyes sleep while my heart is awake.' They said: 'You are right, O Muhammad! Now tell us about the child whether it is from the man or from the woman?' He said: 'As for the bones, the nerves and the veins, they are from the man; and as for the flesh, the blood, the nails and the hairs, they are from the woman.'

They said: 'You are right, O Muhammad! Then why is it that sometimes the child resembles his

paternal uncles, without having a least likeness of his maternal uncles? And sometimes he resembles his maternal uncles without having any likeness at all to his paternal uncles?' He replied: 'He resembles to that parent's (side) whose fluid dominates the other's.' They said: 'You spoke the truth, O Muhammad! Now, tell us about your Lord, what is He?' Then Allah revealed (the Chapter ١١٢):

"Say: "He, Allah is One...

Then Ibn Suriya said: 'One (more) thing; if you tell (us) about it, I shall believe in you and follow you. Which angel is it that brings to you that which Allah reveals to you?' He said: 'Gabriel.' (Ibn Suriya) said:

He is our enemy; he brings the (order of) fighting, hard-ship and war. And Michael' brings comfort and happiness. Had it been Michael who came to you (with revelation) we would have believed in you.' "

The author says: Very many traditions (nearly mutawatir in number) have been narrated by both Sunni and Shi'ah narrators, that (when) the Apostle of Allah (s. a.w. a.) (slept) his eyes used to sleep but his heart kept awake.

Sleep did not make him unaware of himself; when asleep, he was well aware that he was asleep; when he dreamt he knew that he was dreaming. Not too often, this happens to some other good persons too when their souls are clean and they keep in touch with the Divine sublimity.

When the soul rises to that level, it can never be oblivious of the various changes occurring to itself

in its worldly life, nor can it forget its relation to its Lord. At this stage, it may look at the world and its life taking the whole spectrum at one glance, as a man looks at a tree and perceives it all at once. In this detached manner, it observes that all human beings are asleep - not only those who are manifestly asleep, but those too who are .thought to be awake

Almost all men have taken shelter under sensual perception; have bound themselves to the fetters of materialism. They are in fact asleep, even when they think they are "...awake. 'Ali (a.s.) has said: "The people are asleep; when they die they will wake up

This topic will be further explained in other place; other sentences of this tradition too will be explained later

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ١٠٠ —١٠١

point

(١٠٠) أَوَكُلَّمَا عَـٰهَدُواْ عَهدًا نَّبَذَهُ فَرِيقٌ مِّنهُم بَل أَكثَرُهُم لَا يُؤمِنُون

(١٠١) وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُم رَسُولٌ مِّن عِندِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُم نَبَذَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ الكِتَـٰبَ كِتَـٰبَ اللَّهِ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِم كَأَنَّهُم لَا يَعلَمُونَ

What! whenever they make a covenant, a party of them cast it aside? Nay, most of .(them do not believe (١٠٠

And when there came to them an Apostle from Allah verifying that which they have, a party of those who were given the Book threw the Book of Allah behind their backs as .(if they knew nothing (١٠١

Commentary

.(to throw away, to renounce (النَّبْذ) "Qur'an: cast it aside: "an-Nabdh

,Qur'an: And when there came to them an Apostle from Allah...: The word

an Apostle", definitely means the Apostle of Allah, Muhammad (S); it does not refer to" any other apostle who might have come "verifying that which they have", because "when there came" does not mean "whenever there came"; in other words, it does .not signify a recurring incidence, but an event that happened once only

The verse points to the Jews' adverse attitude towards the truth: they were so steeped in falsehood that they concealed the foretellings of the Torah about the Prophet of Islam, and refused to believe in the Qur'an which verified that which they hod in their hands.The verse points to the Jews' adverse attitude towards the truth: they were so steeped in falsehood that they concealed the foretellings of the Torah about the Prophet of Islam, and refused to believe in the Qur'an which verified that .which they hod in their hands

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۱۰۲ — ۱۰۳

point

(۱۰۲) وَاتَّبَعُواْ مَا تَتلُواْ الشَّيَـٰطِينُ عَلَىٰ مُلكِ سُلَيمَـٰنَ وَمَا كفرَ سُلَيمَـٰنُ وَلَـٰكِنَّ الشَّيَـٰطِينَ كَفرُواْ يُعَلِّمُونَ النَّاسَ
السِّحرَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَى المَلَكَينِ بِبَابِلَ هَـٰرُوتَ وَمَـٰرُوتَ وَمَا يُعَلِّمَانِ مِن أَحَدٍ حَتَّىٰ يَقُولَا إِنَّمَا نَحنُ فِتنَةٌ فَلَا تَكفُر فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ
مِنهُمَا مَا يُفَرِّقُونَ بِهِ بَينَ المَرءِ وَزَوجِهِ وَمَا هُم بِضَارِّينَ بِهِ مِن أَحَدٍ إِلَّا بِإِذنِ اللَّهِ وَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مَا يَضُرُّهُم وَلَا يَنفَعُهُم
وَلَقَد عَلِمُواْ لَمَنِ اشتَرَىٰهُ مَا لَهُ فِى الأَخِرَهِ مِن خَلَـٰقٍ وَلَبِئسَ مَا شَرَواْ بِهِ أَنفُسَهُم لَو كَانُواْ يَعلَمُونَ

(۱۰۳) وَلَو أَنَّهُم ءَامَنُواْ وَاتَّقَواْ لَمَثُوبَةٌ مِّن عِندِ اللَّهِ خَيرٌ لَّو كَانُواْ يَعلَمُونَ

And they followed what the satans chanted (of sorcery) against the kingdom of Sulayman; and Sulayman was not an

unbeliever, but the satans disbelieved; they taught men sorcery and what was sent down to the two angels at Babylon, Harut and Marut. Yet these two taught no one until they had said: "Surely we are only a trial, therefore do not be a disbeliever." Even then men learned from these two, that by which they might cause a separation between a man and his wife; and they cannot hurt with it any one except with Allah's permission; and they learned what harmed them and did not profit them; and certainly they knew that he who bought it should have no share (of good) in the hereafter, and vile was the price for which they sold their souls; had they but known .((this) (١٠٢

And if they had believed and guarded themselves (against evil), reward from Allah .(would certainly have been better; had they but known (this) (١٠٣

Commentary

Qur'an: And they followed what the satans chanted... The exegetes have disputed among themselves about each and every aspect of this verse; so much so that the resulting picture of the differences is almost unparalleled in the whole Qur'an. A list of :the differences is given below

they followed ": Does the pronoun, "they", refer to the Jews of the Sulayman's time,"
?or to those at the time of the Prophet, or to all

which may be translated as "chanted", (تَتْلُوْا) "chanted": The Arabic word is "tatlu"
"recited", "told a lie about", "faked" or "followed and acted according to". In which sense the word

.is used here? Every meaning has some supporters

satans": Does it refer to the satans of jinn? Or to those among the human beings? Or" ?to both

against, on, about, upon). Does the = (عَلی) " about": The Arabic participle is " 'ala" phrase mean, about the kingdom of Sulayman? Or, during the reign of Sulayman? Or, ?against his kingdom? Or, on his reign

the satans disbelieved": Some say, they disbelieved because they published the" sorcery among the people. Others say, they disbelieved because they ascribed the sorcery to Sulayman. Still others say, the disbelief, as mentioned here, actually means .sorcery

they taught men sorcery": It means they instructed them as a teacher instructs his" students. No! it means that they buried the chants under Sulayman's chair, and then .directed the men to it who brought it out and learnt it

which is a (مَا) "and what was sent down": The word translated here as "what" is "ma" relative pronoun ("what"); also, it is a particle of negation ("not"). "And" is mostly used as a conjunctive; but not infrequently, it is also used to begin a new sentence. A group says that "ma" means "what", and the conjunctive joins it to "what the satans .(chanted" (the Jews followed what was sent down

Another party is of the opinion that the conjunctive joins it to "sorcery" (the satans taught them sorcery and that which was sent down). A third group thinks that "ma" means "not", and the word "and" begins a new sentence (And sorcery was

.(not sent down to the two angels, contrary to what the Jews claimed

?sent down": Was it sent down from the heavens? Or from the highlands"

the two angels": They were the angels from the heaven. No! They were two good" two angels); = (المَلَكَيْنِ) "men, or men who feigned to be good. No! It is not "al-malakayn .(two kings = (المَلِكَيْنِ) "it is "al-malikayn

Babylon": It is the famous ancient city of Iraq. No! It is a city in Damawand (Iran);" .Wrong! It is the land between Nasibayn (Turkey) and Ra'sul 'Ayn

these two taught no one": Teaching is used in its common meaning of instruction. No!" .It means, these two apprised no one

?do not be a disbeliever": By learning sorcery? Or, by practising it? Or, by both"

the men learned from these two": The "two" refers to the two angels. No! It means," they learned from the two subjects, sorcery and disbelief. Wrong! They learned the .practice of sorcery, in place of the advice given by the angels

that by which they might cause a separation between a man and his wife": Some" exegetes say that they caused love or hate between the couple with the help of their sorcery. Others think that they misled one of the spouses to disbelief and polytheism, and the apostasy caused the separation mentioned here. A third group say that they .created hatred and enmity between the couple with their calumny and slander

This, in short, gives a glimpse of the differences of opinions concerning the explanations of the

words and clauses of the verse. There are still more differences about the event referred to – whether it narrates an actual happening or is just a parable; and so on and so forth. Compute the differences mentioned above and you will get nearly one !!(million and two hundred sixty thousand possible explanations (۴ x ۳۹ x ۲۴

It seems an astounding quality of the Qur'an, that a verse that is subjected to so many divergent interpretations, still maintains its highest standard of eloquence; that in spite of all these vagaries of the exegetes, its meaning is not disjointed, nor its .beauty marred

:A similar treatment has been meted out to the verse

Is he then who has with him clear proof from his Lord, and a witness from him recites .(it and before it (is) the Book of Musa, a guide and a mercy (۱۱:۱۷

However, it appears from the context that this verse deals with a hitherto unmentioned affair of the Jews, that is, their wide-spread use of sorcery. They based .this practice on one or two stories, which were very popular among them

The Jews were addicted to making alterations and interpolations in, and omissions from, their Divine books, let alone the historical narrations. They used to change their books and records fitting them to the prevalent moods of their times. A story narrated by them was not to be relied upon. But this Qur'anic admonition is based on their own belief, because it was they who used to narrate

.these stories

The verse proves that the practice of sorcery was prevalent among the Jews, and that they ascribed it to Sulayman (a.s.). They presumed that Sulayman (a.s.) got the kingdom and subjugated the jinn, the human beings, the animals and the birds - all with the help of sorcery; and all the supernatural miraculous events related to him .depended on witchcraft

And they claimed that some of the enchantments in their hands had come down to them from him. The remaining portion was attributed to the two angels at Babylon, .named Harut and Marut

The Qur'an refutes the stories, saying that the prophet Sulayman (a.s.) never indulged in witchcraft and sorcery. How could he, when sorcery was nothing but disbelief in Allah? Sulayman (a.s.) could not be an unbeliever as he was a sinless, innocent :prophet. All this is clearly seen from the words of Allah

and Sulayman was not an unbeliever, but the satans disbelieved, they taught men" sorcery"; "and certainly they knew that he who bought it should have no share (of good) in the hereafter". Sulayman's position was too distinguished, his rank too high, .and his name too sacred to be associated with disbelief and sorcery

He was the prophet whose outstanding position has been eulogized in several places in the chapters of Meccan period, long before this Chapter of the Cow was revealed. See, for example, the chapters of the Cattle (۶th), the Prophets (۲۱st), the Ant (۲۷th) .(and Sad (۳۸th

You shall find therein that Sulayman (a.s.) was an excellent

servant of Allah, a prophet and an apostle; Allah gave him the knowledge and the .wisdom; and granted him a kingdom which was not fit for any one after him

Obviously, Sulayman could not indulge in sorcery; it was just a mythical story invented by the satans, which they dictated to their human friends; and it was the satans who .disbelieved because they misguided the men by teaching them sorcery

:As for the story of the two angels at Babylon, the Qur'anic stand is as follows

The two angels, Harut and Maria, were certainly given some sorcery as a means of test and trial for the human beings - and no objection could be raised against that; after all, Allah has taught the human nature the ways of evil too in order that He may .test them with it

Likewise, sorcery was sent down to the two angels; but they did not teach it to anyone until they had said to him: Surely we are only a trial, therefore do not become a disbeliever by using it for wrongful purposes; you must use it only to nullify the .effect of witchcraft, to expose the viles of the sorcerers and things like that

But the men learned from them that by which they might destroy the domestic peace and turn the love between husband and wife - the best of the things ingrained in human nature - into hatred, causing a separation between them. Also they learned .what harmed them and did not benefit them

The verse

p: ۲۰

:therefore may be explained as follows

And they (i.e., the Jews coming after the reign of Sulayman - every generation passing on the legacy to the later one) followed what the satans from among the jinn faked .and lied about the kingdom of Sulayman

translated here as recited or chanted) actually has the connotation = (تـَتْلـُوْا "Tatlu" = (عَلىٰ" of "lied about " or "faked about", because it is followed by the preposition " 'ala .on) which has changed its semantic value

Why do we say that the satans were from the jinn? The following two verses read :together provide the answer to this question

And of the satans there were those who dived for him and did other work beside that, ;(and We kept guard over them (٢١:٨٢

and when he fell down, the jinn came to know plainly that if they had known the .(unseen, they would not have tarried in abasing torment (٣۴:١۴

The first verse shows that the satans were reduced to subjection by Sulayman (a.s.) who kept them away from mischief by assigning to them very heavy task; and the .second verse refers to the same slavish group as the jinn

Qur'an: and Sulayman was not an unbeliever: "and" is used here in the meaning of "while". Sulayman did not indulge in sorcery; therefore, it was not he who disbelieved; rather it was the satans who disbelieved, because they misled the people by teaching .them sorcery

Qur'an: and what was sent down: The Jews followed that which was sent down - through

inspiration – to the two angels at Babylon, Harut and Marut. Yet these two did not .teach any one any thing of the sorcery, without warning him not to practice it

They admonished every one who wanted to learn sorcery: Surely we are only a trial for you. What we teach you is but a means of test for you. Beware! Don't become an .unbeliever by practising sorcery

Qur'an: Even then men learned from these two: that is, from the two angels, Harut and Maria. "that by which they might cause a separation", that is, the sorcery which ."caused separation "between a man and his wife

Qur'an: and they cannot hurt with it any one except with Allah's permission: It is a parenthetic sentence, to remove a possible misunderstanding: One could assume, on hearing that the sorcerers caused separation between a husband and his wife, that the sorcerers were powerful enough to disturb the divinely ordained arrangement of the world; that they could undo the Divine Decree and change the system created by .Allah

This sentence clears the air and emphasizes the fact that sorcery draws its strength from the Divine Decree; it cannot affect any thing but with the permission of Allah. .Therefore, the sorcerers act within the framework of the system designed by Allah

This sentence was placed where it is because only the preceding sentence (that by which they might cause a separation…) mentions the effect of sorcery. Therefore, it was explained that whatever effect it had was based on the permission

.of Allah

The following clause (and they learned what harmed them and did not profit them) is not concerned with this aspect of sorcery, and the above-mentioned clarifying .parenthetic sentence, if placed after it, would have looked out of place

Qur’an: and certainly they knew that he who bought it should have no share (of good) in the hereafter: They knew it because their reason and intellect told them that the sorcery was the most wicked source of disorder in the society. Also, they were made :aware of it by Musa (a.s.) when he had said

.(and the magician shall not be successful wheresoever he may come from (۲۰:۶۹

Qur’an: and vile was the price for which they sold their souls; had they but known (this): They knew that sorcery was bad for them and ruinous for their future abode; yet it was as though they did not know it - because they did not act according to their knowledge. If a knowledge fails to lead the knower to the straight path, then it is not .knowledge; it is ignorance

:Allah says

Have you then seen him who takes his low desire for his god, and Allah has made him .(err in spite of (his) knowledge… (۴۵:۲۳

Therefore, it was completely in order to wish for them know-ledge and guidance, .even if they had had the knowledge before

Qur’an: And if they had believed and guarded themselves….: If they had followed the dictates of belief and piety, instead of following the satans' yarns and practising sorcery which is

.nothing short of disbelief, they would have got its reward from Allah

This verse indicates that the disbelief emanating from sorcery is a disbelief within the sphere of action, like that which results from withholding zakat; it is not a disbelief within the sphere of faith. Had the sorcery been a disbelief within the sphere of faith, Allah would have only said, “And if they believed”, with-out adding “and guarded .”(themselves (against evil

The Jews had believed, no doubt; but they did not guard themselves against evil and did not desist from the things forbidden by Allah; therefore, Allah did not attach any .importance, any value, to their belief, and they were called the disbelievers

Qur’an: reward from Allah would certainly have been better; had they but known (this): that is, better than the rewards and profits they seek through sorcery and .amass through disbelief

Traditions

al Baqir (a.s.) said, inter alia, explaining the words of Allah, And they followed what the satans chanted (of sorcery) against the kingdom of Sulayman...: “When Sulayman died, Iblis invented sorcery and wrote it in a book; then folding it, wrote on its back: 'This is the valuable treasure of knowledge which Asif ibn Barkhiya produced for the king Sulayman ibn Dawud. Whoever wanted such and such thing, should do so and '.so

Then he buried it under his throne. Thereafter, he unearthed it for the Jews and recited it (before them). The disbelievers said: 'Sulayman had not gained supremacy :over us but because of this.' And the believers said

!Nay'

He was a servant of Allah and His prophet.' Thus Allah, Great is His remembrance! said: And they followed what the satans chanted (of sorcery) against the kingdom of Sulayman." (at-Tafsir, al-'Ayyashi, al-Qummi).

The author says: This tradition says that it was the Satan, that is, Iblis, who invented sorcery and wrote and recited it. There is no discrepancy between this statement and the verse under discussion which ascribes these things to the satans from among the jinn.

Even their deeds are ultimately attributed to the Iblis, because he is the source of all evil; it is he who instigates his friends to wickedness and evil. Such usage is common in the traditions.

It appears from this tradition that the verb, "tatlu" in this verse is derived from "at tilawah" (التـِّلاوَةُ = to recite, to chant). It not in conflict with the interpretation given by us in the Commentary that it gives the meaning of "lied about" or "faked about"; because, as we said there, this connotation emerges from the preposition, " 'ala " which has changed its semantic value.

The sentence, therefore, may be interpreted as follows: The satans chanted the sorcery, reciting it, and faking it, lying about the kingdom of Sulayman.

Etymologically, tala, yatlu, tilawatan (تَلاـ، يَتلوا ، تِلاـوَةً) returns to waliya, yali, wilayatan (وَلِى ، يَلِى ، ولايَةً) which has the semantic value of being near to, governing and following; one owns a thing gradually, one part following the other - reciting is called at-tilawah

.simply because in recitation one word follows the other

:A fuller discourse of this subject will be given under the verse

Verily, your guardian is only Allah and His Apostle and those who believe, those who .(establish prayer and pay zakat while they bow down (۵:۵۸

ar-Rida (a.s.) said, inter alia, in his discussion with al... Ma'mun: “And as for Harut and Marut, they were two angels; they taught sorcery to the people in order that they could protect themselves from the enchantments of the sorcerers, and could nullify their devices. And they did not teach any one any (enchantment) until they had said to :him

'.Surely we are only a trial, therefore do not be a disbeliever'

But a group became disbelievers by practising what they were warned against; and they caused a separation between a man and his wife with their practice (of sorcery). Allah has said: and they cannot hurt with it any one except with Allah's permission.” .(('Uyunu 'l-akhbar

On Some Spurious Traditions

Ibn Jarir has narrated from Ibn "Abbas that he said: “When-ever Sulayman wanted to enter the toilet or to attend to some of his affairs, he gave his ring to al-Jaradah, his wife. When Allah decided to test Sulayman in the way He tested him, one day Sulayman gave his ring (as usual) to al-Jaradah. Then Satan came to her in the :likeness of Sulayman and said

Give me my ring.' So he took it and put it on. As soon as he did so, the satans (from the' (jinn and the human beings

came under his control. Then came Sulayman and said to her: 'Give me my ring.' She said: 'You are a liar; you are not Sulayman.' So Sulayman knew that it was a trial to .test him

The satans got a free hand, and wrote, in those very days, some books containing enchantments and disbelief, and buried them under the chair of Sulayman. .Thereafter they unearthed them and recited them before the people

And they said: 'It was because of these books that Sulayman dominated over the people.' Thus the people avoided Sulayman and accused him of disbelief. (It continued) until Allah sent Muhammad (S) and revealed to him: and Sulayman was not (an unbeliever, but the satans disbelieved." (ad-Durru '۱-manthur

The author says: This story is found in other traditions too. It is a long story forming a part of a multitude purporting to show the supposed sins and mistakes of the .prophets

Said ibn Jarir and al-Khatib (in his at-Tarikh) have quoted Nafi' as saying: "I went on a journey with Ibn 'Umar. When the night was coming to its end, he said: 'O Nafi'! Look at the red star(۱), has it risen?' Twice or thrice I said: 'No.' Then I said: 'It has risen.' He said: 'No welcome to it!' I said: 'Praise the Lord! (It is but) a star, subjugated, obedient '!(and) submissive

He said: 'I have not told you except that which I heard the Apostle of Allah (S) saying. He said: "The angels (once) said: 'O Lord! How doest Thou

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۱- The red star refers to the Mars, but as will be seen later, Ibn 'Umar is supposed to talk about the Venus. Obviously, the man who forged this "tradition" did not know the (.difference between the Mars and the Venus. (tr

:bear with the mistakes and sins of the children of Adam?' (Allah) said

I have put them to trial and given them some dispensation.' They said: 'If we were in' their place, we would not have disobeyed Thee.' He said: 'Then select (for trial) two '.angels from among yourselves

They spared no effort in the selection and (finally) selected Harut and Marut. They came down (to the earth); and Allah created in them the lust." (At this juncture, Nafi' said: 'And what is lust?' He said: 'Sexual urge.') "Then there came a woman, az-Zuhrah (i.e., Venus) by name, and both felt attracted towards her, each concealing his feeling .from his companion

Then one of them asked the other: 'Do you feel in your heart what I do in mine?' The other said: 'Yes!' Thereupon, they asked her for themselves. She said: 'I will not give you power (over myself) until you teach me the name by which you ascend to, and descend from, the heaven.' They refused to do so. Then they asked her again; and .(again she refused. At last they did (teach her the name

When she flew (to the heaven), Allah effaced her into a star and cut her wings. Then the (two angels) sought pardon from Allah; and He gave them an option, saying: 'If it is your wish, I shall let you return to the position you held before, and then you shall .be punished on the Day of Resurrection

Or, if you wish, I shall chastise you in this

world, and when the Day of Resurrection comes you shall be reinstated to your previously held position.' So one of them said to the other: 'The punishment of this '.world will come to an end and will be short-lived

Therefore, they opted for this world's chastisement against the punishment of the next world. And Allah revealed to them to go to Babylon. They went there and the earth swallowed them up; they are hanging upside-down between the heaven and the earth, undergoing punishment up to the Day of Resurrection." ' " (ad-Durru 'l-(manthur

The author says: Something like this has been narrated in some Shi'ah books too from al-Baqir (a.s.). as-Suyuti, the Sunni traditionalist, has narrated more than twenty traditions of the same theme about Harut, Marut and the Venus; some of those traditions have been confirmed as having "correct" chains of narrators; and the chains end on various companions, like Ibn ''Abbas, Ibn Mas'ud, 'Ali, Abud-Darda', .'Umar, 'A'ishah and Ibn 'Umar

These are fictitious stories, which collectively ascribe to the angels of Allah the worst type of polytheism and the most heinous sins, that is, idol-worship, murder, fornication and liquor-drinking. Could the angels indulge in such sins, when they are known to be the honoured servants of Allah who are purified from all sins and ?mistakes

And they accuse the planet Venus to be a woman of loose character, who was transformed into a luminary body - have you ever heard of such a punishment!! - while it is known to be a

heavenly body, free from any defect in its creation or any flaw in its system; a planet :by which Allah swears in the Qur'an

.(But nay! I swear by the stars that run their course (and) hide themselves... (۸۱:۱۵-۱۶

Moreover, the astronomy has today unveiled its reality, and found out in detail the elements it is made of, as well as their quantity and combination - in short all matters .related to it

This story, like that given earlier (about Sulayman and his ring), is in complete agreement with the legends popular among the Jews. They remind one of the Greek .mythology related to the stars and the planets

A discerning reader will agree that these traditions, like those slandering and defaming the prophets and apostles, are but a few samples of the intrigues and .machinations of the Jews

Their prevalence in the Muslims' books of traditions is a living proof of the hold they held on the Muslims' minds in the early days of Islam. The Jews toyed with the Muslim traditions in any way they liked; and the Muslim traditionalists were their willing .partners in these interpolations

But Allah has kept His Book under His Own protection. The enemies of truth cannot play with it. Whenever one of their satans tries to steal a hearing he is chased away :by a visible flame. Allah has said

Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most certainly be its guardian ;((۱۵:۹

and most surely it is a Mighty Book: Falsehood shall not come to it from

;(before it nor from behind it; a revelation from the Wise, the Praised One (۴۱:۴۱- ۴۲

And We reveal of the Qur'an that which is a healing and mercy to the believers, and it .(adds only to the perdition of the unjust (۱۷:۸۲

The promise given in these verses is unconditional. Every interpolation, every alteration is repulsed by the Qur'an. The Book of Allah unmasks the true face of the :interpolators, adding to their perdition. Also, the Apostle of Allah (S) has said

Whatever is in conformity with the Book of Allah, take it; and whatever is against it," leave it." The ummah has been given this frame of reference; it is this yardstick with which all the traditions attributed to the Prophet and his Ahlu 'l-bayt are to be .measured

:The Qur'an removes every falsehood and exposes every deception. Allah says

Nay! We cast the truth against falsehood, so that it breaks its head, and lo! it vanishes ;((۲۱:۱۸

and Allah desired to manifest the truth of what was true by His words... that He may manifest the truth of what was true and show the falsehood of what was false, even .(though the guilty ones disliked (۸:۷-۸

.Allah confirms the truth and erases the falsehood by showing the true faces of both

Some people, and especially those with materialistic out-look, who are overawed by the western civilization, have used the above-mentioned historical fact as a pretext to .throw away all the traditions attributed to the Prophet

They looked at some traditionalists and al-Haruriyyah and found that they

accepted every tradition – without any scrutiny whatsoever. They reacted to it by going to the other extreme and rejecting every tradition – without any scrutiny .whatsoever

It needs not much intelligence to realize that the total acceptance of the traditions is .as bad as its total rejection

Its unconditional acceptance nullifies the standard laid down for the purpose of differentiating between the truth and the falsehood; and encourages one to ascribe lies to the Prophet. Likewise, its indiscriminate rejection casts aside the said standard and leads one to the rejection of the Book of Allah itself – the Mighty Book that .falsehood does not come to it from before it nor from behind it

Allah has said in this Book: and whatever the Apostle gives you, take it; and from ;(whatever he forbids you, keep back (۵۹:۷

And We did not send any apostle but that he should be obeyed by Allah's permission .((۴:۶۴

If the sayings of the Prophet had no authority, or if his words – reported to his contemporaries who were absent from his gathering or to the generations coming .after his time – had no validity then nothing of the religion could survive at all

Man by his instinct relies and accepts the reports brought by others – he cannot survive without it. As for the alterations and interpolations, it is not a disease peculiar .to the traditions of the Prophet

The society depends on the reported news and information; and the motives to tell lies, to make changes and alterations to

suit one's purpose, to twist the words and to quote them out of context, are much more stronger in the case of the worldly affairs.

So, what do we do? Do we reject all reports and information? No! We scrutinize every report with the help of some well-established and relevant standard; what passes the test, is accepted as truth; and that which fails is thrown aside as falsehood; and if no clear result emerges from the test, if we are unable to decide whether the report was true or not, we reserve our judgment - as our nature tells us to do in such cases.

The above procedure is applied regarding the subjects we have some expertise about. As for a subject outside our specialty, the common practice is to refer it to the specialists in that field and accept their judgment.

This is, in short, the dictate of human nature for the smooth running of the society. The self same system is adhered to in religion for distinguishing truth from falsehood. The litmus-paper of this test is the Book of Allah - if a tradition conforms to it, its truth is confirmed; if it clearly goes against it, its false-hood is known; and if no definite stand may be taken because of some ambiguities, then the judgment is reserved.

This system has been explained in the mutawatir traditions of the Prophet and the Imams (of the Ahlu 'l-bayt - a.s.). It applies to all the traditions that are not concerned with jurisprudence; as

for those dealing with the law and jurisprudence, they are governed by the Principles .of Jurisprudence

A Philosophical Discourse on Sorcery and Witchcraft

It is a common knowledge that many unusual events do take place which are outside the frame of the established natural system. It is difficult to find someone who has not .seen, or heard about, some abnormal or seemingly supernatural events

But we find after scrutiny that most of them are not enigmatic and mysterious at all; rather they arise from normal and natural causes. Often they result from practice and training, for example, eating poison, lifting heavy load, walking or dancing on tight-.rope etc

Some are based on natural causes that are not known to the general public, for example, a man walks into flaming fire without coming to any harm, (he applies some chemicals like talc to his body); or sends a sheet of blank paper and the addressee .understands the message it contains

He writes with an invisible ink which becomes visible if heated by fire or treated with) some chemicals.) A third set depends on the sleight of hand like jugglery. All these seemingly abnormal feats actually emanate from the normal causes, although the causes remain hidden from a common man's eyes; they may even be beyond his .ability

Yet there are other strange happenings that cannot be attributed to any normal physical cause. For example, giving information of the unseen, and particularly foretelling the future events; the charms for love and hate, the spells harmfully or beneficially affecting man's virility; hypnotism; mesmerism; spiritualism; telekinesis

.and so on

It is known that such events do take place from time to time; we have seen some demonstrations ourselves; and similar reports were brought to us by reliable sources. Today there are many people in India, Iran and the western countries, who .demonstrate such extraordinary feats - and their authenticity is beyond doubt

It appears from close investigation of their methods and regimen that these feats spring from the will-power of the doer, and from his unshakable confidence in effectiveness of his work. The will-power emanates from the confidence, which in its .turn arises from the knowledge

Sometimes the will acts independently and sometimes it needs some help: for example, writing a certain charm with a certain ink in a certain place at a certain time (for the amulets of love or hate); or fixing a mirror before a certain child (in the seances of spiritualism); or chanting a certain incantation a certain number of times, and so on and so forth. When the conditions are fulfilled the will is strengthened to .bring the desired effect into being

When the knowledge becomes one with the knower, it influences his senses to such an extent that he sees the end product, that is, the desired effect, with his eyes. You may verify this statement yourself. Just tell yourself that a certain person is present before you and that you are looking at him; then put your imagination to work to bring his form before your eyes; this should be raised to such

.a high level of certainty that you become oblivious of all contrary thoughts and ideas

And then you will actually see him standing before you - as you had imagined. Many is a doctor who, acting on this principle, restored to health his incurable patients - simply .by creating in them the confidence that they would soon get their health back

Taking this principle a step further, if someone's will-power is extraordinarily strong, it might create an impression on other's psyche too - as it had created on his own self in the foregoing example. That impression might, or might not, depend on fulfillment of .some conditions, as indicated earlier

:From the above discourse, we may deduce the following three principles

First: The appearance of such extraordinary events depends on the firm “knowledge” and strong conviction of the doer. But it is irrelevant whether that “knowledge” is true to the fact or not. That explains why the conjurations of the priests of the sun-god and the moon-goddess etc. seemed to work - although they believed that the heavenly .bodies had souls, which they claimed to bring under their control by their magic

Probably the same applies to the angels and satans whose names are “discovered” and invoked by many practitioners of the magic art. The same is true for spiritualism and its séance and spirit communication - and the spiritualists' belief that the spirits .attend their sittings

Utmost that may be claimed regarding those sessions, is that the spirit appears in their imagination or, let us

say, before their senses – and this “perception” emanates from their firm belief in their art. But it can never be said that the spirit actually presents itself at those sittings – otherwise all the participants in the sitting should have perceived its presence, .because everyone of them has the same senses as the medium has

By accepting this principle, we may solve many problems related to the séance and :spirit communication. For example

١ – Sometimes the spirit of a living man is called to present itself at a séance, and supposedly it comes there. But at that very moment, that man is busy attending to his affairs, and he never feels his spirit leaving him even for an instant. The question is: As a man has only one spirit, how was it possible that his spirit presented itself to that ?séance without his being aware of it

٢ – The spirit is an immaterial essence which has no relation whatsoever with space ?and time. How can it present itself at a certain place at a certain time

٣ – Why is it that often a single spirit appears before different mediums in different ?forms

۴ – Why is it that sometimes when the spirits are called to a séance, they tell lies and give wrong answers? And why do the various spirits sometimes contradict each ?other

All these problems will be solved if the principle is accepted that it is not any spirit that presents itself to the séance; it is only the firm

belief and conviction of the spiritualist and his medium that is at work, making the medium see, hear and feel the spirit. It is all a play of his imagination and will; and .nothing more

Second: Some of the people, holding the strong and effective will-power, rely on their own power and their own being, in bringing about the desired effect, the intended super-natural events. Such events are bound to be limited in strength, confined in .their scope - in their own imagination as well as in reality

On the other side, there are some persons, like the prophets and the friends of Allah who, in spite of their most effective will-power, totally rely on their Lord. They truly .worship Him and have full trust in Him

They do not wish any thing but from their Lord, and by His permission. Theirs is a pure and clear will, untainted by any personal feeling of their own. It does not depend except on Allah. This is a Divine Will - not limited in any way, nor restricted in any .manner

The super-natural events that are brought into being by the first group may be of many kinds: If they are based on enquiry of, or help from, a jinn or a spirit etc., then it is called “al-kihanah” (اَلكِهَانَةُ = divination, sooth-saying, fortune-telling); and if it comes about by means of a charm, amulet, telesm or other such instruments or .portions, then it is called magic

The super-natural events shown by the prophets and

friends of Allah are also of many kinds: If it is produced as a challenge, in order to prove the truth of the claim of prophethood, then it is called miracle; and if it is not which literally means (اَلـكَـرامَه ٔ) offered as a challenge, then it is named “al-karamah nobility, mark of honour; and in Islamic terminology is used for a miraculous event shown without a challenge; and if it happens as a result of the prayer to Allah, then it ”.is called, “answer to the prayer

Third: As the whole thing depends on the will-power of the doer, its strength varies according to the strength (or weakness) of the will. That is why some of them may .nullify the others, as, for example, the miracle annihilates the sorcery

Also, a weak agent fails to impose his will on a stronger psyche, as is often seen at the .sessions of mesmerism, hypnotism and seances

.We shall further explain this subject somewhere else

An Academic Description of Various Kinds of Magic

There are many fields of study dealing with various awe-striking feats and extraordinary deeds; and it is very difficult to classify them so as not to leave any thing out. However, we give here a list of the more commonly used branches of this :art

as-Simiya': It deals with the ways of combining the will-power with particular physical and material forces for manipulating the natural order and, thus, producing extraordinary effects. Under this head comes the manipulation of thought, also .known as the eye-enchantment

It is the most deserving candidate for

.the title of magic

al-Limiya': It teaches how one may establish a connection between his psyche and the higher and stronger spirits, in order that one may bring them under one's control, for example, the spirits of the stars, or the jinn, etc. It is also called the knowledge of .subjugation of the spirits

al-Himiya': It explains how the powers of the higher spiritual world may be combined with the base elements of this world to produce awe-inspiring effects. It is also called talisman. The stars and their configuration have some relation to the material happenings of this world, in the same way as the elements and compounds and their .physical qualities affect those phenomena

Supposedly if the heavenly forms, pertaining to a certain event, for example, A's life or B's death, could be combined with the relevant material forms, the desired effect .would take place without fail

ar-Rimiya': It trains one how to control and manipulate the qualities of various things, to produce seemingly super-natural effects. It is also called "ash-Sha'badhah (اَلش_َّعْبَذَه) = sleight of hand, jugglery, magic).

'These four fields of knowledge, together with the fifth, called "al-Kimiya (اَلك_ِيمياءُ) = alchemy, the forerunner of chemistry, primarily the attempt to transmute base metals into gold or silver) formed what the ancients called the five secrets, mysterious .branches of knowledge

Ash-Shaykh al-Baha'i has said: "The best book written on these subjects was the one I saw in Harat, 'Kulah-e sar' (the head's cap) by name. Its name was an acronym, made of

the first letters of the five subjects, that is, al-Kimiya', al Limiya', al-Himiya', as-Simiya' .”'and ar-Rimiya

The- standard books of these subjects are the epitome of the books of Minds, Rasa'il, al-Khusraw Shahi, adh-Dhakhirah, al-Iskandariyyah, as-Sirru 'l-maktum (by ar-Razi), at-Taskhirat (by as-Sakkaki) and A'malu 'l-kawakib as-Sab'ah (by al-Hakim Tamtam .(al-Hindi

:Supplementary to the above are the following subjects

The knowledge of numbers (numerology): It shows the relation of numbers and letters with the desired effect. The relevant letters or numbers are filled in a magic .square or triangle etc. in a particular sequence

the hidden knowledge): It breaks down the name of the = (اَلخَافِيَه) :al-Khafiyah desired effect or other relevant names, and finds out the names of the angels or the satans managing the said effect; and then composes the invocations made of those .names

The books written by ash-Shaykh Abul-'Abbas al-Buni and as-Sayyid Husayn al-Akhlati are the standard works of the above two subjects.

Then there are various modern arts covering this field, which have gained wide currency nowadays; for example, mesmerism, hypnotism and spirit communication. As described earlier, these are based on the impression created on the imagination by the will-power. There are numerous well-known books and magazines dealing with .these subjects

We have given all this detail here, so that it may be ascertained which of them could be classified as magic or sorcery

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ١٠٤ – ١٠٥

point

(١٠٤) يَـٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ لَا تَقُولُواْ رَٰعِنَا وَقُولُواْ ٱنظُرۡنَا وَٱسۡمَعُواْ ۗ وَلِلۡكَٰفِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

(١٠٥) مَّا يَوَدُّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ مِنۡ أَهلِ ٱلكِتَـٰبِ وَلَا ٱلمُشرِكِينَ أَن يُنَزَّلَ عَلَيكَم مِّنۡ

p: ۴۱

خَيرٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمۡ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ يَختَصُّ بِرَحمَتِهِۦ مَن يَشَآءُ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ ذُو ٱلفَضلِ ٱلعَظِيمِ

O you who believe! do not say, “Have regard for us”, and say, “Wait for us”; and listen; and for the unbelievers there is a painful chastisement (١٠٤).

Those who disbelieve from among the People of the Book do not like, nor do the polytheists, that any good should be sent down to you from your Lord; and Allah chooses especially whom He pleases for His mercy, and Allah is the Lord of mighty grace (١٠٥).

Commentary

Qur’an: O you who believe!: It is the first place in the Qur'an where the believers have been addressed in this way, “O you who believe!” This mode of address has been used in some eighty-five places in the Qur'an.(١)

Addressing the believers as “O you who believe!”, or describing them as “those who believe”, is a special distinction accorded to this ummah. Otherwise, the previous nations are variously described as “the people” (e.g., “the People of Nuh, and, “the People of Hud”; 'He said: 'O my people! have you considered if I have a clear proof from my Lord... ' ” [١١: ٨٨]); and “the dwellers” (e.g., “the dwellers of Madyan”, “the dwellers of the Rass”); and “the children” (e.g., “the Children of Israel”, "O Children of Israel!”). The epithet, “those who believe”, is, therefore, a mark of honour awarded to the believers of this ummah.

It appears from deep meditation of the Qur'an that the import of the words, “those who believe”, is somewhat different

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١- Eighty-eight, to. be exact. Vide al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras, (by Muhammad Fu'ad 'Abdul-Baqi). (tr.)'١

:from that of the words, “the believers”. (For an example of the latter, see the verse

.([and turn to Allah all of you, O believers! [۲۴:۳۱

:Allah says in the Qur'an

Those who bear the throne and those around it celebrate the praise of their Lord and believe in Him and ask forgiveness for those who believe: “Our Lord! Thou embracest all things in mercy and knowledge, therefore grant forgiveness to those who turn (to Thee) and follow Thy way, and save them from the punishment of the hell. Our Lord! and make them enter the gardens of perpetuity which Thou hast promised to them and those who do good of their fathers and their wives and their offsprings, surely .(Thou are the Mighty, the Wise” (۴۰:۷-۸

It shows that the angels and the bearers of the throne ask forgiveness for “those who believe”; then the same group has been referred to as “those who turn (to Thee) and follow Thy way”. (“turn” actually means, return.) The prayer continues to “make them (i.e., those who believe) enter the garden” and then joins to them the doers of good ”.from among “their fathers and their wives and their offspring

If the epithet, “those who believe”, were to include all those who believed in the Apostle of Allah (S) irrespective of the quality of their belief, then it would have covered their fathers, wives and children as well (who do good); and there would have been no need to mention

them separately; all would have equally benefited from

.the prayer for those who believe

:Also, have a look at the verse

And (as for) those who believe and their offspring follow them in faith, We will unite with them their offspring and We will not diminish to them aught of their work; every :(man is responsible for what he has wrought (۵۲:۲۱

If the offspring who followed them in faith, were included in the epithet, "those who believe", there would be no sense in saying that the offspring would be united with .them

Even if we were to say that the verse refers to the generation after generation of the believers, that every succeeding generation will be united to the preceding one (provided both believed in the Apostle of Allah - S), the meaning would not seem very ?"proper in the context. If that were the import of the verse, then why this "uniting

Also, what purpose would be served by the sentence, "and We will not diminish to them aught of their work"? Such an interpretation may prove correct for one generation only, that is, the last one before the Day of Resurrection - that they would be united with the preceding generation. But nobody has suggested this meaning as it goes clearly against the context. What such an interpretation would boil down to is as :follows

All the believers are united, one of them being from another; all of them are of one rank; none has any excellence over the others; nor has an earlier believer any ;superiority over the later ones

.their main qualification is the true belief, and all of them are equal in it

Such a meaning would not fit the wording of the verse which clearly shows that the preceding believers have a sort of superiority over their offspring, who would be raised to the rank of their progenitor as a token of honour to the latter.

The phrase, "and their offspring follow them in faith", proves that the preceding word, "those who believe" refers to a particular group of the believers - the foremost and the first of the Emigrants and the Helpers who followed the Apostle in the hour of straitness. The epithet, those who believe, is a title of honour bestowed on that distinguished group.

:Other two verses too point to this fact

It is) for the poor who fled... and those who made their abode in the city and in the) faith before them... and those who came after them say: "Our Lord! forgive us and those of our brethren who had precedence of us in faith, and do not create any spite in our hearts towards those who believe; our Lord! surely Thou art Kind, Merciful" .((۵۹:۸-۱۰

This verse uses two phrases, "who had precedence of us in faith", and "those who believe". If the import of both were the same, a pronoun would have looked better in place of the second phrase. By not using a pronoun, Allah has made it clear that each phrase has its own significance.

Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah; and those with

him are severe against the unbelievers, compassionate among themselves, you will see them bowing down, prostrating themselves, seeking grace from Allah and pleasure;... Allah has promised those among them who believe and do good, .(forgiveness and a great reward (۴۸:۲۹

All this shows that the phrase, "those who believe", is a title of honour, reserved for the first and foremost of the believers. Most probably, the opposite phrase, "those who disbelieve", has the contrasting significance, and refers to the polytheists of Mecca and others who were the first and foremost of those who disbelieved in the ,Apostle of Allah (S). For example

Surely those who disbelieve alike is to them whether you warn them or do not warn (them, they will not believe. (۲:۶

Objection: This interpretation means that when the Qur'an says, "O you who believe! ", it addresses a special group that was present in the Prophet's time, to the exclusion of all other believers. But all the Muslims agree that such verses are general in their import and that what is said therein applies to all the believers, whether they were present in the Prophet's days or not; and that this mode of address includes all the .believers - in reality, not metaphorically

Reply: Yes! It is a title of honour, reserved for a selected few. But it does not mean that what is said in those verses is in any way restricted to those few. Whatever order or prohibition is given in such verses is general and applies to all

the believers. The matter of legislation – whether a given order is general or exclusive – is quite different from that of a speech – whether it is addressed to all the believers .or to a few of them

Also, it makes no difference whether a verse ordaining a law is addressed to the believers (O you who believe!) or to the Prophet in person (O Prophet!; O Apostle!), or .is revealed without any address at all

The ordained law in all these cases is applicable to all the Muslims, and covers all the believers; although the verse may be addressed to the Prophet or to those who .believe as a mark of respect to him or them

Nevertheless, one should not indiscriminately interpret the phrase, "O you who believe!" and "those who believe", as referring to the first and foremost believers of the Prophet's time; rather one should look at the context, before deciding the true .connotation of these phrases in a given verse

:For example, look at the verse

Surely (as for) those who believe then disbelieve, again believe and disbelieve, then increase in disbelief, Allah will not forgive them nor guide them in the (right) path ;((۴:۱۳۷

:and the verse which quotes Nuh (a. s.) as saying

and I am not going to drive away those who believe; surely they shall meet their Lord .((۱۱:۱۲۹

Obviously, the phrase, those who believe, used in the above verses cannot refer to .the above-mentioned group

Qur'an: do not say, "Have regard for us", and say, "Wait for us"; and

listen: That is, use the phrase, Wait for us, instead of saying, Have regard for us. And if you failed to comply with this command, it would be tantamount to disbelief, and for the disbelievers there is a painful chastisement. It is a very strong admonition against saying, "ra'ina" (راعِـنا) = Have regard for us).

This phrase has also been mentioned in another verse, which gives an indication of its connotation:

Of those who are Jews (there are those who) alter words from their places and say: "We have heard and we disobey"; and: "Hear, may you not be made to hear!" and "ra'ina", distorting (the word) with their tongues and taunting about religion (۴:۴۶).

Obviously, the Jews used the phrase, "Ra'ina" for something similar to the phrase, "Hear, may you not be made to hear!" And that is why such a mode of addressing the Prophet was prohibited. This explanation agrees with what the tradition says: When the Prophet talked with the Muslims, they used to tell him: "Ra'ina (have regard for us)

O Apostle of Allah!" - that is, wait for us, so that we may properly understand what you are saying.(۱)

But this word carried a connotation of abuse in the Jews' language. The Jews seized upon this opportunity, addressing the Prophet with this phrase, pretending to show respect to him while their intention was nothing short of abuse. And in their usage it meant, "Hear, may you not be made to hear."

Thereupon, Allah revealed:

Of those who are Jews (there

۱- It is more or less equivalent to the English idiom "I beg your pardon". But with a slight change of accent it may come to mean, stupid or cattle tenderer. (tr.)

are those who) alter words from their places and say: “We have heard and we disobey”; and: “Hear, may you not be made to hear!” and: “ra'ina ”, distorting (the word) with their tongues and taunting about religion; and if they had said (instead): “We have heard and we obey”, and “hearken”, and “onzurna” (wait for us), it would .(have been better for them and more upright (۴:۴۶

The believers too were told not to use this phrase and say instead, “onzurna ”; the .” 'Qur'an guided them: “do not say, 'Have regard for us', and say, 'Wait for us

Qur’an: and for the unbelievers there is a painful chastisement: that is, for those who disobey this rule. It is one of the occasions when disobedience of a law of religion has .been termed as disbelief

Qur’an: Those who disbelieve from among the People of the Book...: Obviously, the phrase, “the People of the Book”, refers here exclusively to the Jews, because the preceding verses too dealt with them. If so, then the phrase would serve as a pointer to the cause why they did not like that any good should be sent down to the believers .from their Lord

The Jews were given a Book before and they were not happy when the Qur'an was sent down to the Muslims, as it deprived them of their distinction as being the People of the Book. They showed avarice about a thing they did not own; they wanted to stand against Allah when He bestowed

His mercy and grace on His servants; “and Allah chooses especially whom He pleases .”for His mercy; and Allah is the Lord of mighty grace

On the other hand the phrase, as used in this verse, may include all the People of the Book - the Jews and the Christians both. If so, then the verse would serve to widen the scope of the admonition; it would be a generalization after exclusiveness. Both groups shared many characteristics - and especially their enmity to Islam. Some :verses coming afterwards strengthen this interpretation. For example

And they say: “None shall enter the garden except he who is a Jew or a Christian” ;((٢:١١١

And the Jews say, ”The Christians do not follow anything (good)”, and the Christians (say, ”The Jews do not follow any-thing (good)”... (٢:١١٣

Traditions

Abu Nu'aym has narrated in Hilyatu 'l-awliya' from Ibn 'Abbas that he said: “The Apostle of Allah (S) said: 'Allah has not revealed any verse (beginning) with, “O you (who believe!” but that 'Ali is its head and leader.' ” (ad-Durru 'l-manthur

The author says: This tradition supports what we shall be quoting in various places :that a certain verse was revealed about 'Ali (a.s.) or Ahlu 'l-bayt; for example

;(You are the best of the nations raised for (the benefit of) men (٣:١١٠

;(that you may be witnesses over the people... (٢:١٤٣ ...

.(and be with the true ones (٩:١١٩ ...

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ١٠۶ — ١٠٧

point

(١٠٦) مَا نَنسَخۡ مِنۡ ءَايَةٍ أَوۡ نُنسِهَا نَأۡتِ بِخَيۡرٖ مِّنۡهَآ أَوۡ مِثۡلِهَآۗ أَلَمۡ تَعۡلَمۡ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيۡءٖ قَدِيرٌ

(١٠٧)

أَلَمۡ تَعلَمۡ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَهُ ٱمُلكَ ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلأَرۡضِ ۗ وَمَا لَكُم مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ مِن وَلِيّٖ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ

Whatever signs We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or like it. Do you not know that Allah has power over all things? (١٠٦).

Do you not know that Allah's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and that besides Allah you have no guardian or helper? (١٠٧).

Commentary

The verses deal with the subject of abrogation. The word, abrogation, when used as a term of Islamic fiqh, means as follows: To show that the time of an order has come to its end; that it is no more valid, is no longer in force. This definition is based on the above verse; and is one of the manifestations of its connotations.

Qur'an: Whatever signs We abrogate...: "an-Naskh" (النَّسْخُ) is removal, to remove, to annul. The Arabs say: Nasakhati 'sh-shamsu 'z-zilla (نَسَخَتِ الشَّمْسُ الظِّلَّ) = the sun removed the shadow). Allah says:

And We did not send before you any apostle or prophet, but when he desired, the Satan made a suggestion respecting his desire; but Allah annuls that which the Satan casts, then does Allah establish His signs; and Allah is Knowing, Wise (٢٢:٥٢).

Also, they say: Nasakhtu 'l-kitab (نَسَخْتُ الكِتابَ) = I copied the book); it is as though the writing was removed and its place changed. That is why another verse uses the word "at-tabdil" (التَّبْديلُ) = to change) in place of

:abrogation

And when We change (one) sign for (another) sign, and Allah knows best what He .(reveals, they say: "You are a forger". Nay, most of them do not know (۱۶:۱۰۱

Abrogation, however, does not entail obliteration of a verse, turning it into a non-being. Its only effect is the cancellation of the order which the verse had promulgated. It should be noted that the Qur'anic verse has been described as a "sign", that is, a .mark that points to another thing - a verse is a sign pointing to a Divine Command

The second verse, "Do you not know that Allah's is the kingdom of the heavens and .the earth...", gives the reason as to why Allah abrogates some Qur' anic verses

All these factors indicate that abrogation removes a verse as far as its quality as a sign, as a symbol, is concerned. When abrogated, the verse remains in existence as before, but loses its quality as a sign - no longer does it point to an order, as the order .is now cancelled

The next phrase, "or cause to be forgotten", clearly supports the foregoing is to make one forget, to erase out of memory, to (اَلإِنْسَاءُ) " 'explanation. "al-Insa eradicate from knowledge. By putting the two phrases side by side, the Qur'an makes it clear that abrogation entails erasure of a verse's effect, while "al-insa'" causes .eradication of the verse itself from the memory

Symbolism - the quality of being a sign of something - varies with various signs having

various aspects and directions. The Qur'anic verses are the signs of Allah because the jinn and the men are jointly and severally unable to bring its like; the rules ordained by Allah are His signs inasmuch as they create piety in man and bring him nearer to his Lord; every created thing is His sign, because it, by its existence, proves the existence of its Creator, and by the qualities of its being, leads to His attributes and names; the prophets and the friends of Allah are His signs inasmuch as they, with their words and deeds, call the humanity to Allah, and so on and so forth. Consequently, a sign may be great or small, strong or weak; that is why Allah says:

(Certainly he saw of the greatest signs of his Lord (۵۳:۱۸).

Also, a sign may contain only one aspect of symbolism, and another may comprise of various such aspects. The former, when abrogated, is obliterated in its entirety, is completely destroyed. But in the case of the latter, it is possible to abrogate only one aspect of its symbolism, leaving the other ones intact; for example, a Qur'anic verse could be abrogated as far as its law was concerned, and yet continue as a Divine Sign because of its eloquence and miraculous qualities.

This generalized meaning of abrogation has been inferred from the reasoning given in the second verse: "Do you not know that Allah's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth..." There are only two objections

possible against the factuality of abrogation; or, as the reports say, these were the two arguments advanced by the Jews against it.

First: A sign given by Allah contains an actual benefit which cannot be obtained from any other thing. If that sign is abrogated, its inherent benefit would be lost; nothing could take its place to preserve that benefit. Allah is not like His creatures, nor is His knowledge like theirs. His knowledge does not change with the changes in external factors.

It is not that one day He knew one thing and issued an order according to that knowledge; then next day the knowledge changed and He became aware of another factor which He did not know before, and therefore He had to cancel the previous order, replacing it with a fresh one.

Such inconsistency is not worthy of Divine Sublimity. Of course, it is all right for us mortals, because we cannot comprehend all the aspects of an affair; and as a result of this incomplete knowledge, our decisions are frequently changed and amended. But we should not compare Divine Knowledge without limited and defective perception.

Here it is necessary to point out that such an objection arises from a notion that the power of Allah is neither comprehensive and all-encompassing nor unrestricted and unconditional.

Second: Accepted that the Divine Power is all-encompassing and limitless. But once a thing is created it goes beyond the sphere of that power, and cannot be changed. Even in our case, we have power to do

or not to do a certain work – so long as we have not done it; but once we have done it, .it becomes an essential being, and goes beyond the limits of our power

This argument is based on the rejection of the all–encompassing ownership of Allah; it presupposes that once Allah has managed a certain affair in a certain way, He cannot :change that arrangement in another way. This Jewish belief is portrayed in the verse

.(And the Jews say: "The hand of Allah is tied up" (۵:۶۴

Allah replies to the first objection with the question: "Do you not know that Allah has power over all things?" He certainly has power over all things. Therefore, He may .replace a sign with an equally good or even a better sign

The second objection is dealt with by the next question: "Do you not know that Allah's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and that besides Allah you have no "?guardian or helper

Allah is the Owner of the heavens and the earth; He can do whatever He likes with His property. No one besides Him owns any thing; otherwise, that owner could interfere .in the management of Allah or put restriction on His authority and control

None else owns any thing – neither in his own rights nor even when Allah gives to him a partial ownership. When we transfer the ownership of a property to another person, the transferee gets all the rights which we had in that property, and

.our rights are rendered null and void

But when Allah gives a property into someone's possession, Allah's ownership of the property is not disturbed in any way - it does not come to an end, is not even diminished. He continues to be the real Owner and Controller of the property which He has given to others. His is the unrestricted ownership and unconditional .management

If we look at what He has put under our ownership - with-out our having any independent authority over it - then He is our Guardian. And if we look at the apparent independenceenjoyed by us, with His grace - although it is a poverty in the shape of plenty, a dependence disguised as independence - then too we cannot manage our .affairs without His help; and He is our Helper

The above explanation is based on the sequence and style of the two verses. First, there is the exclusivity of the declaration: "Allah's is the kingdom..." Then there is the ?sequence: "Do you not know that Allah has power over all things

Do you not know that Allah's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth...?" The two sentences have not been joined with any conjunctive, a sure indication that each is independent of the other, and that the first sentence deals with one objection and the .second with another

The last sentence, "and that besides Allah you have no guardian or helper", gives a finishing touch to the above replies: Even if you are oblivious of Allah's

all-encompassing power and ownership, and are looking at this nominal ownership of yours, you will know that it is not a permanent or independent ownership; you cannot manage it independently; you need a guardian to look after your interests - and Allah is that guardian. He can and does manage your affairs and your property as He likes.

On the other hand, if your eyes are so fixed on this possession as to make you forget your dependence; if you think that you are the independent and absolute owner of your property, even then you will have to admit that you cannot manage your own affairs, cannot obtain the results you want, without the help and assistance of a super power.

And Allah is your real Helper; it is He who manages your affairs and your property for you. From whatever angle you look at this matter, Allah's power over all things and His ownership of every thing remain unchallenged and undisputed. "and that besides Allah you have no guardian or helper": Apparently it should have been 'besides Him'.

Then why did the Qur'an use the noun instead of the pronoun? It was to indicate that the foregoing sentences contain the complete replies, and this sentence is not their integral part; rather it is an independent declaration to stengthen those replies.

This discourse leads us to the following conclusions:

First: Abrogation is not a thing confined to only the religious laws; it holds its place in the sphere of creation too.

Second: Abrogation cannot take place

without two sides: (i) The abrogated thing or verse, (ii) the abrogative, that is, the .thing or verse that abrogates

Third: The abrogative contains all the benefits and the perfection that was found in .the abrogated thing

Fourth: Although the abrogative differs from the abrogated in its form, both have one thing in common - the perfection and the benefit. When a prophet dies and another is sent in his place - and both of them are the signs of Allah, one abrogating the other - it takes place in total conformity with the natural system. Life, death, sustenance and other such things often replace each other, the succeeding factors abrogating the .preceding ones

It all depends on the varying needs of the society's welfare, on ever-changing level of the man's perfection. Like-wise, when a religious law is replaced by another, the abrogating one has the same power as the abrogated one had, to lead to the spiritual and temporal well-being of the individual and the society; each perfectly suitable for .the time it was, or is, in force; each more beneficial in the context of its time

For example, the order to "forgive" in the beginning of the call when the Muslims had neither the manpower nor the armaments, and the command to "fight" when Islam had gained some strength, when the Muslims had gathered enough force and the disbelievers and the polytheists were frightened of them. However, seldom is an abrogated verse devoid of some phrase showing that it was a transitory

.order which would be abrogated in due course

:For example: The verse

,(But pardon and forgive (them) until Allah should bring about His command (۲:۱۰۹

:which was abrogated by the verse of fighting; and

,(confine them until death takes them away or Allah makes some way for them (۴:۱۵ ...

which was abrogated by the verse of flogging. The phrases, "until Allah should bring about His command", and, "or Allah makes some way for them", give clear indication that the order given therein was temporary and transitory which would soon be .abrogated

Fifth: The relation between the abrogative and the abrogated is quite different from that which is found between a general statement and a particular, between an unconditional clause and a conditional, or between an unspecified proposition and a .specified

What removes the apparent contradiction between the abrogative and the abrogated, is the society's and the individual's good and well-being which is found in both of them. But the apparent contradiction between a general statement and a par-ticular, between an unconditional clause and a conditional, or between an unspecified proposition and a specified, emanates from the strong (or weak) manifestation of the .intended meaning

The true intention of the speaker is reflected much more strongly and clearly in a particularized statement, a conditional clause and a specified proposition; and that strength and clarity removes the above-mentioned apparent contradiction - by explaining the general in the light of the particular, the unconditional with the help of .the conditional and the unspecified in the frame of the specified

These things

are the subject of the Principles of Jurisprudence. The same applies to the decisive :and the ambiguous verses, as we shall explain under the verse

of it there- are some verses decisive, they, are the basis of the Book, and others are ... (ambiguous... (۳:۷

is derived from "al-insa' " (to cause (نُنْسِهَا) "Qur'an: or cause to be forgotten: "Nunsiha to be forgotten; to erase from memory or knowledge), as we have described earlier. .It is a general and unconditional statement

It is not restricted to the Apostle of Allah (S); nay, it does not include him at all. Allah :had said about him

.(We will make you recite so you shall not forget, except what Allah pleases (۸۷:۶ -۷

It is a Meccan verse, while the verse of abrogation is of Medina period. Obviously the ."Apostle could not forget anything after the promise of Allah, "so you shall not forget

Question: This claim is untenable because the promise has the proviso, "except what Allah pleases". It means that the Apostle (S) could forget what Allah was pleased to .make him forget

Reply: Such exceptional clauses serve only to emphasize the power of Allah; they do not necessarily mean that the thing mentioned in that clause would actually take :place. Look for example at the verse

they shall be in the garden, abiding in it as long as the heavens and the earth ... .(endure, except as your Lord pleases... (۱۱:۱۰۸

t just shows that Allah does have power to change the arrangement made; but all the

Muslims agree that the people of the paradise will never be taken out of it. The same .is the import of the exceptional clause, “except what Allah pleases”, in this verse

Moreover, if the said clause were to prove that the Prophet (S) could actually forget the things taught by Allah, depending on the pleasure of Allah, there would be no .”sense in putting him under obligation by promising him, “you shall not forget

Any human being who remembers any thing, or forgets it, does so by the pleasure of Allah. The same is true about the animals who remember and forget by His pleasure and decree. And the Prophet too, before this promised grace of Allah, remembered by .the pleasure of Allah, and forgot by the pleasure of Allah

What new grace was added here if the promise meant only a quality which the Prophet had already had? If that promise were to make any sense, it would have to mean that the Prophet could never forget anything, although Allah had full power to .make him forget

) ” 'derived from “an-nas ,(نَنْسَأهَـا) ”Some people have recited the word as “nansa'aha to delay). According to this recitation, the meaning would be as follows: = (اَلـن ـّسْـأ Whatever signs We abrogate by nullifying it, or put it off by delaying its appearance, We bring one better than it or like it, and the Divine management in advancing .something or putting it off, does not diminish its perfection or benefit

The fact that the

Divine Management always brings out a thing's perfection and benefit, is inferred from the clause, “We bring one better than it or like it”. The goodness emanates from .the perfection of a thing or benefit of a laid down rule

The abrogated thing or rule was surely good; and the abrogating thing or rule too is at least as good, if not better. So, every Divine Management is the ideal of goodness, .perfection and benefit

Traditions

Innumerable traditions have been narrated by both sects, from the Prophet (S), his companions, and the Imams of his Ahlu 'l-bayt, that there are abrogated and .abrogating verses in the Qur'an

The Commander of the faithful ('Ali - a.s.) said, after enumerating various abrogated :and abrogating verses: “And the word of Allah

And I did not create the jinn and the human beings except that they should worship (Me (۵۱:۵۶

:was abrogated by His word

and they shall continue to differ, except those on whom your Lord has mercy; and for ,(this did He create them (۱۱:۱۱۸ - ۱۱۹

.(that is, for the mercy did He create them.” (at-Tafsir, an-Nu'mani

The author says: In this tradition the Imam has used the word, abrogation, in a wider sense than its terminological meaning. The latter verse mentions a reality which restricts the reality described by the former. The first verse affirms the Divine Wor-.ship as the purpose of creation

While doing a work, Allah keeps a purpose in view; and He cannot be defeated in His purpose. On the other hand, he has decreed that they

should choose their own path, and consequently some of them progress on the right .path, while others go astray

Those who by their own choice choose the path of guidance are covered by the mercy of Allah, and it is for this mercy that He has created them. In this way, the second verse affirms another purpose for the creation: The mercy which accompanies the .worship and guidance

This goal is reached by only a selected few, while the first verse had affirmed a goal for all the jinn and the men, and that is the Divine Worship. Some people are created for some others, and those others for yet others; this chain continues till it reaches .the group which sincerely worships Allah

Looking from this point of view, it is easy to understand why all the jinn and men have been said to be created for the worship. We plant a garden and nurse the trees for their fruits. The real purpose is the fruits, but the trees and their branches and leaves are planted, protected and looked after because they are the means to get the fruits. .And it will be quite right to say that the garden's purpose was its fruits

In the same way, the second verse "abrogates" the generality of the first verse, .focusing its sight on the true worshippers who are the recipients of the mercy of Allah

:The same book narrates from the same Imam that he said: "And the word of Allah

And there is not one of

,(you but shall come down to it; this is a decided decree of your Lord (١٩:٧١

:was abrogated by His word

Surely (as for) those whom the good has already gone forth from Us, they shall be kept far off from it; they will not hear its faintest sound, and they shall abide in that ".(which their souls long for. The great fearful event shall not grieve them (٢١:١٠١-١٠٣

The author says: It must be noted that the relation between these two verses is not that found between a general declaration and a particular one. The first verse says that it is a decided and unavoidable decree of Allah; and such a decree cannot be rendered null and void, it cannot be cancelled. What the "abrogation" mentioned in this tradition means will be explained, God willing, in the exegesis of the verse ٢١:١٠١, .mentioned above

(اَلبِدآءُ) (al-Baqir (a.s.) said: "Among the (various types of) abrogation is "al-bada' "(١) contained in the word of Allah: Allah effaces what He pleases and establishes (likewise), and with Him is the basis of the Book (١٣:٣٩); and (demonstrated in) the (saving of the People of Yunus." (al 'Ayyashi

The author says: Its reason is clear. Some traditions of the Imams of the Ahlu 'l-bayt (a.s.) count the death of an Imam and his being succeeded by another Imam as an .example of the abrogation

The author says: We have already explained this matter. The number of the traditions .containing this theme reaches to nearly mutawatir

Abd ibn Hamid, Abu'

١- al Bada' (اَلبَدَآءُ) is a terminology of Shi'ite theology. It means that Allah makes known His plan to His chosen servants only to that extent which is beneficial to the mankind or which is necessary to make a test meaningful. When the time comes when the angel, Prophet or Imam concerned thinks that the plan of work is coming to its end, a

new development extends the plan or brings it to an unexpected end. The saving of the People of Yunus and the intended sacrifice of Isma'il are among its examples. (tr.)

Dawud (in his an-Nasikh wa 'l-mansukh) and Ibn Jarir have narrated from Qatadah that he said: "(During the lifetime of the Prophet) a verse used to abrogate (another) verse; and the Prophet of Allah used to recite a verse, and a chapter, and as much as Allah wished of a chapter, then it was raised (i.e. erased) and Allah caused His Prophet .to forget it

So, Allah said narrating it to His Prophet: Whatever signs We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it; He says: There is (some) ease in it, some (allowance in it, some order in it, (and) some prohibition in it." (ad-Durru '١-manthur

The author says: The same book quotes numerous traditions on the theme of "causing to be forgotten"; but all of them have to be discarded because they go against the teaching of the Book of Allah, as we have explained in the meaning of this .word

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ١٠٨ — ١١٥

point

(١٠٨) أَمۡ تُرِيدُونَ أَن تَسۡـَٔلُواْ رَسُولَكُمۡ كَمَا سُئِلَ مُوسَىٰ مِن قَبۡلُ ۗ وَمَن يَتَبَدَّلِ ٱلۡكُفۡرَ بِٱلۡإِيمَـٰنِ فَقَدۡ ضَلَّ سَوَآءَ ٱلسَّبِيلِ

(١٠٩) وَدَّ كَثِيرٌ مِّنۡ أَهۡلِ ٱلۡكِتَـٰبِ لَوۡ يَرُدُّونَكُم مِّنۢ بَعۡدِ إِيمَـٰنِكُمۡ كُفَّارًا حَسَدًا مِّنۡ عِندِ أَنفُسِهِم مِّنۢ

بَعۡدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ ٱلۡحَقُّ ۖ فَٱعۡفُواْ وَٱصۡفَحُواْ حَتَّىٰ يَأۡتِيَ ٱللَّهُ بِأَمۡرِهِۦٓ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيۡءٍ قَدِيرٌ

(١١٠) وَأَقِيمُواْ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتُواْ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ ۚ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُواْ لِأَنفُسِكُم مِّنۡ خَيۡرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِمَا تَعۡمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

(١١١) وَقَالُواْ لَن يَدۡخُلَ ٱلۡجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَن كَانَ هُودًا أَوۡ نَصَـٰرَىٰ ۗ تِلۡكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمۡ ۗ قُلۡ هَاتُواْ بُرۡهَـٰنَكُمۡ إِن كُنتُمۡ صَـٰدِقِينَ

(١١٢) بَلَىٰ مَنۡ أَسۡلَمَ وَجۡهَهُۥ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحۡسِنٌ

فَلَهُ ۥۤ أَجرُهُ ۥ عِندَ رَبِّهِۦ وَلَا خَوفٌ عَلَيهِم وَلَا هُم يَحزَنُونَ

(۱۱۳) وَقَالَتِ ٱليَهُودُ لَيسَتِ ٱلنَّصَـٰرَىٰ عَلَىٰ شَىءٍ وَقَالَتِ ٱلنَّصَـٰرَىٰ لَيسَتِ ٱليَهُودُ عَلَىٰ شَىءٍ وَهُم يَتلُونَ ٱلكِتَـٰبَ ۗ
كَذَٲلِكَ قَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ لَا يَعلَمُونَ مِثلَ قَولِهِم ۚ فَٱللَّهُ يَحكُمُ بَينَهُم يَومَ ٱلقِيَـٰمَةِ فِيمَا كَانُواْ فِيهِ يَختَلِفُونَ

(۱۱۴) وَمَن أَظلَمُ مِمَّن مَّنَعَ مَسَـٰجِدَ ٱللَّهِ أَن يُذكَرَ فِيهَا ٱسمُهُ ۥ وَسَعَىٰ فِى خَرَابِهَا ۚ أُوْلَـٰٓئِكَ مَا كَانَ لَهُم

أَن يَدخُلُوهَا إِلَّا خَآئِفِينَ ۚ لَهُم فِى ٱلدُّنيَا خِزىٌ وَلَهُم فِى ٱلأَخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

(۱۱۵) وَلِلَّهِ ٱلمَشرِقُ وَٱلمَغرِبُ ۚ فَأَينَمَا تُوَلُّواْ فَثَمَّ وَجهُ ٱللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ وَٲسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

Or, do you wish to put questions to your Apostle, as Musa was questioned before? And whoever adopts unbelief instead of faith, he indeed has lost the right way (۱۰۸).

Many of the People of the Book wish that they could turn you back into unbelievers after your faith, out of envy on their part, (even) after the truth has become manifest to them. But pardon and forgive (them) until Allah should bring about His command. Surely Allah has power over all things (۱۰۹).

And keep up prayer and pay the zakat, and whatever good you send before for yourselves you shall find it with Allah; surely Allah sees what you do (۱۱۰).

And they say: “None shall enter the garden except he who is a Jew or a Christian ”. These are their vain desires. Say: “Bring your proof if you are truthful” (۱۱۱).

Yes! whoever submits his self entirely to Allah and he is the doer of good, he has his reward with his Lord, and there is

.(no fear for them nor shall they grieve (۱۱۲

And the Jews say: "The Christians do not follow anything (good) ", and the Christians say: "The Jews do not follow anything (good) ", while they recite the Book. Even thus say those who have no knowledge, like to what they say; so Allah shall judge between .(them on the Day of Resurrection in what they differ (۱۱۳

And who is more unjust than he who prevents (men from) the mosques of Allah, that His name shall not be remembered in them, and strives to ruin them? (As for) those, it was not for them that they should have entered them except in fear; they shall meet with disgrace in this world, and they shall have great chastisement in the hereafter .((۱۱۴

And Allah's is the East and the West; therefore, whither you turn, thither is Allah's .(face; surely Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing (۱۱۵

Commentary

Qur'an: Or, do you wish to put questions to your Apostle...: It appears from this sentence that some of the Muslims – although believing in the Prophet (S) - had put some questions to him not unlike the questions put to Musa (a.s.) by the Jews. That is .why they have been placed here in line with the Jews for admonition

.The tradition too supports this interpretation

.Qur'an: the right way: that is, the straight path

Qur'an: Many of the People of the Book wish...: Reportedly it refers to Huyayy ibn al-.Akhtab and other Jews who were with him

:(Qur'an: But pardon and forgive (them

.According to the exegetes this order was abrogated by the verse of fighting

Qur'an: until Allah should bring about His command: As indicated above, this clause alludes to a command that was to be revealed in not too distant a time about the :Jews. The case is similar to the verse

As for) those, it was not for them that they should have entered them except in fear) ,((٢:١١٥

:when read together with the verse

the idolaters are nothing but unclean, so they shall not approach the Sacred Mosque .(after this (very) year... (٩:٢٩

The clause, "except in fear", had hinted to the intended ban that was promulgated .later

:command) under the verse = (اَلأَمْرُ) "We shall explain the meaning of "al-amr

And they ask you about the soul. Say: "The soul is from the command of My Lord" .((١٧:٨٥

Qur'an: And they say: "None shall enter the garden except he who is a Jew or a Christian": The verse explicitly joins the Christians with the Jews; from now on the sins .and crimes of both will be enumerated together

Qur'an: Yes! whoever submits his self entirely to Allah and he is the doer of good, he has his reward with his Lord: It reiterates for the third time the basic principle that the spiritual felicity does not depend on name or nomenclature, that no one can get .honour with Allah except by true faith in, and total surrender to, Him

:The first declaration was in the verse

Surely those who believe and those who are Jews, and the

Christians, and the Sabaens, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does ;(good, they shall have their reward... (۲:۶۲

:the second one was in the verse

Yea! whoever earns evil... And (as for) those who believe and do good deeds, these ;(are the dwellers of the garden... (۲:۸۱-۸۲

.the third is this verse under discussion

A comparison of this verse with the previous two shows that the true belief entails to do good) is = (اَلإِحْسَانُ) "submitting one's self entirely to Allah; and "al- ihsan .synonymous to the good deeds

Qur'an: while they recite the Book: that is, while they follow the Book revealed to them. They should not say such things because they have the Book with them and it .clearly shows them where the truth is

This explanation is supported by the next sentence, "Even thus say those who have no knowledge, like to what they say". The word, "those who have no knowledge", refers to the unbelievers (other than the People of the Book) and the polytheists of Arabia. They used to say, "The Muslims do not follow any-thing good", or "The People ."of the Book do not follow anything good

Qur'an: And who is more unjust than he who prevents. Apparently it refers to the unbelievers and polytheists of Mecca. These two verses were revealed not long after .the Apostle of Allah (S) emigrated to Medina

Qur'an: it was not for them that they should have entered them except in fear: The verb, "was", shows that the sentence describes a

.past event. It perfectly fits the pagans of Mecca and their misdeeds

The traditions say that "he who prevents" refers to the unbelievers of Mecca, it was they who prevented the Muslims from praying in the Sacred Mosque (Masjidu 'l-Haram) and in other mosques within the precinct of the Ka'bah.

Qur'an: And Allah's is the East and the West: The east and the west - any direction, whatsoever - really belong to Allah. His is the true mastership that cannot be altered or transferred; it is not like the possession known to us in our society's framework.

Allah's ownership permeates the possessed thing itself as well as its benefits and effects, unlike our ownership that covers only the benefits and effects, and not the thing itself.

A property, possession, per se, cannot stand except with its owner. Therefore, the east and the west, nay, all the directions whatsoever, exist because of Allah - the Owner. Allah preserves and manages the directions, and encompasses them. Anyone turning to any of the directions, turns in reality to Allah.

The east and the west are relative terms. They cover al-most all the directions, except the two imaginary points of the true north and the true south. That is why Allah left the clause, "whither you turn", unconditional, and did not say, 'whither you turn of these two directions.'

To whatever direction one turns one's face, it is bound to be either east or west. The sentence, "And Allah's is the East and the West", therefore, implies that all

.the directions belong to Allah

The east and the west were selected for special mention because man fixes the .directions with the help of rising and setting of the sun and other heavenly bodies

Qur'an: therefore, whither you turn, thither is Allah's face: It puts the cause in place of the effect. What the sentence implies is as follows: To whichever direction you turn, it .is allowed to you, because Allah's face is in that directions too

The concluding clause, "surely Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing", supports this translated here as "ample-giving") literally means = (اَلْوَاسِعُ) " 'interpretation."al-Wasi extensive, abounding, far-reaching. It implies that Allah's ownership is extensive and .all-pervading and every direction belongs to Him

He is All-knowing too; therefore, He knows what your aim and intention is, no matter whichever direction you turn your face to. He is not like human beings or other creatures - if we want to see some physical object, we have to turn to a particular direction in order to bring it into focus. But Allah is not confined to a particular .direction; turn to any direction, you are turning to Allah, and Allah knows it

The verse gives a latitude about the qiblah, as far as its directions is concerned, but not apropos its location as may be inferred from the clause, "And Allah's is the East .and the West", inasmuch as it mentions the directions only

Traditions

Muhammad ibn al-Husayn said: "It was written to al-'Abdu 's-Salih: 'A man prays in a cloudy day in an open

space and he does not know the (direction of) qiblah, he prays; and when he has finished his prayer, the sun appears and (he finds that) he had prayed against qiblah. '?Should he regard his prayer (as valid) or should he repeat it

He wrote: 'He should repeat it if the time (of prayer) is not over. Does he not know that Allah says - and His word is true: therefore, whither you turn, thither is Allah's face?'" ((at-Tahdhib

al-Baqir (a.s.) said about the word of Allah: And Allah's is the East and the West...: "Allah has revealed this verse especially for the voluntary prayer; therefore, whither .you turn, thither is Allah's face; surely Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing

And the Apostle of Allah prayed on his camel by making gestures (for the actions of the prayer) wherever it turned to, when he proceeded to Khaybar, and also when he (returned from Mecca - and the Ka'bah was behind his back." (al-'Ayyashi

The author says: al-'Ayyashi has narrated another tradition of nearly the same meaning through Zurarah from as-Sadiq (a.s.); and so have done al-Qummi and ash-.(.Shaykh from Abu 'l-Hasan (a.s.) and as-Saduq from as-Sadiq (a.s

If you study the traditions of the Imams of the Ahlu 'l-bayt, related to the exegesis of the Qur'anic verses - the general and the particular; the unconditional and the conditional - you will see that often they infer one rule from the general verse, and .another rule from the same when read together with the particular one

,For example

the general verse implies a voluntary rule; but read with the particular one it promulgates an obligatory law. The same applies to the cases of disliked and forbidden things. And so on.

The above is a key factor in understanding the traditions narrated from the Imams; and on it depends the knowledge of a multitude of their traditions.

You may infer from it two important principles of the Qur'anic knowledge:

First: Every Qur'anic clause or sentence, taken alone, describes an established reality or rule; when it is joined to another revealed qualifying clause, it indicates another reality or rule; add to it another qualification or condition and you get a third set of confirmed reality or law; and so on. For example, look at the verse:

(Say: "Allah; then leave them sporting in their vain discourses" (۶:۹۱).

It indicates four separate meanings depending on the word we stop at: First, "Say: Allah"; second, "Say: Allah; then leave them"; third, "Say: Allah; then leave them in their vain discourses"; fourth, "Say: Allah, then leave them sporting in their vain discourses". Many such examples may be found in the Qur'an.

Second: If two stories or two themes are joined in one sentence or clause, both of them must be having a common base.

These two esoteric principles of exegesis open the way to many Qur'anic secrets – and Allah is the true Guide.

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۱۱۶ — ۱۱۷

point

(۱۱۶) وَقَالُواْ اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا سُبحَـٰنَهُ بَل لَّهُ مَا فِى السَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَالأَرضِ كُلٌّ لَّهُ قَـٰنِتُونَ

(۱۱۷) بَدِيعُ السَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَالأَرضِ وَإِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ

لَهُ كُن فَيَكُونُ

And they say: “Allah has taken to himself a son”. Glory be to Him; rather, whatever is in the heavens and the earth is His; all are obedient to Him (116).

The Originator of the heavens and the earth; and when He decrees an affair, He only says to it, “Be”, and it is (117).

Commentary

Qur’an: And they say: 'Allah has taken to himself a son ”: Obviously the pronoun ”they” refers to the Jews and the Christians; the former said that 'Uzayr was the son of God; the latter claimed the same thing for Jesus Christ. The verse takes the admonition of the People of the Book a step further.

The People of the Book initially used the phrase, son of God, for their prophets etc. as a mark of respect for them - in the same way as they used the words, sons of God and His chosen people, for themselves. Gradually, the metaphorical sense gave way to the real one, and 'Uzayr and Jesus Christ were believed to be the sons of God in the real sense of the word.

Allah refuted their claim in these two verses. They contain two proofs against them.

The first proof is given in the words: “whatever is in the heavens and the earth is His; all are obedient to Him.” How does one beget a son? A physical being removes some of his parts from himself and develops and nurtures it into another member of the species, similar to himself.

Now, nothing can

be similar to Allah; He is far above such things; whatever is in the heavens and in the earth belongs to Him, is His property; every thing is made existent by Him, is managed by Him; it is by nature obedient to Him, subservient to Him. Things being as they are how can any thing be similar to Allah? Does God belong to a species? How ?"can He beget someone of the same "species

The second proof is given in the second verse: "The Originator of the heavens and the 'earth; and when He decrees an affair, He only says to it, 'Be', and it is." "al-Badi (اَلبَدِيْعُ = translated here as the Originator) is used for the one who invents and originates a thing without any previous model, without any existing blue-print. Only Allah is the .Originator in the true sense of the word

He originates every thing; no creature of His resembles any fellow creature. His creation is not like others' production inasmuch as He does not make any thing by imitation; He does not create gradually, nor with the help of the secondary causes; when He decides an affair, He only says to it, "Be", and it is - without any need of any .previous model or gradual development

How can such an Originator be said to take to himself a son? After all, begetting a son .entails gradual development

These are the two incontestable proofs which expose the fallacy of the belief that God has begotten a

:son. The verses also prove the following two facts

First: The command to obey Allah and to worship Him is all-pervading; it is binding to all that is in the heavens and in the earth.

Second: The actions of Allah are not gradual. It follows that every thing that comes into being gradually, must have another non-gradual existence which emanates from the Divine Command. Allah says:

His command, when He intends any-thing, is only that He says to it, 'Be", and it is ((۳۶:۸۲).

(And Our command is but one, as the twinkling of an eye (۵۴:۵۰).

A detailed discussion of this Qur'anic reality will be given, God willing, under the verse ۳۶:۸۲, quoted just above.

Qur'an: Glory be to Him: "subhan" (سُـبْحَانَ) "at- is an infinitive verb, synonymous to "tasbih" (اَلتـَّسْبِيحُ) = glorification of God). It is always used as a first member of genitive construction - the second member always being the name, 'Allah' (or a pro-noun referring to Him).

Grammatically it is in accusative case pointing to a deleted verb. Originally it was, sabbahtuhu tasbihan (سَبَّحْتـُهُ تـَسْبِيحاً = I glorified Him as He should be glorified); but the verb was deleted and the infinitive verb was joined to the pronoun 'Him' in genitive construction, to stand in place of the verb.

By using this phrase here, Allah has taught the believers the manner of declaring His glory whenever something unworthy of His sacred name is ascribed to Him.

Qur'an: all are obedient to Him: "al-Qunut" (اَلقـُنُوتُ) = to worship; self-abasement).

Qur'an: The Originator

of the heavens…: Originating implies that the thing so created is not like any other .thing

Qur’an: and it is: The sentence branches out from the word, “Be”. The preceding clause is not a conditional one; that is why this verb is not in apocopate form, that is, .its last vowel has not been cut off

Traditions

Sudayr as-Sayrafi said: “I heard Humran ibn A'yan asking Abu Ja'far (a.s.) about the word of Allah: The Originator of the heavens and the earth. Abu Ja'far (a.s.) said: 'Verily Allah, Mighty and Great is He!, originated all things by His (Own) Knowledge, without there being any previous model. So, He originated the heavens and the earth, and there were no heavens or earth before them. Do you not listen to His word, and (His throne was on the water?' ” (al-Kafi; Basa'iru 'd-darajat

The author says: The tradition points to yet another fine point. It shows that “the water”, mentioned in this verse, is something different from the water known to us. .The Imam has quoted this verse to prove that Allah's creation is based on originality

And the Divine authority and power, before the creation of these heavens and this earth, was firm on the water. Obviously, the water mentioned here was not the water :of this earth, or like this earthly water. We shall explain it further under the verse

.(and His throne was on the water (١٢:٧

An Academic and Philosophical Discourse on the Originality of the Creation

The experience as well as the philosophical argument proves that any two things are different from each other in

their respective particulars even if they are united in their common and general .characteristics

Even if the two are so alike as to make it difficult for the senses to discern any dis… similarity between them, when seen or tested with the help of scientific instruments clear differences come before the eyes. It means that every creation is unique and .original; no two things are made of one model

Now we should look at this matter from the philosophical point of view. Let us take any two things sand see why they are distinct from each other. If the basis of .distinction is not a thing within their own selves, then it must be an outside factor

In that case, their selves must be absolute and indivisible entities. But an absolute and indivisible entity cannot be duplicated nor repeated. In other words, the two distinct .entities would become one and the same. And it is a contradiction in terms

Therefore, we have to admit that every being is different in its own self from all other beings. It follows that every thing is unique; and does not have any similarity or likeness to any other thing. And it is Allah who has given every thing its uniqueness, .distinction and originality, as He is the Originator of the heavens and of the earth

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۱۱۸ – ۱۱۹

point

(۱۱۸)وَقَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ لَا يَعلَمُونَ لَوۡلَا يُكَلِّمُنَا ٱللَّهُ أَوۡ تَأۡتِينَآ ءَايَةٌ ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ قَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبلِهِم مِّثلَ قَوۡلِهِمۡ ۘ تَشَٰبَهَتۡ قُلُوبُهُمۡ ۗ قَدۡ بَيَّنَّا ٱلأَيَٰتِ لِقَوۡمٍ يُوقِنُونَ

(۱۱۹) إِنَّآ أَرۡسَلنَٰكَ بِٱلحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا ۖ وَلَا تُسۡـَٔلُ عَنۡ

أَصحَـٰبِ ٱلجَحِيمِ

And those who have no knowledge say: "Why does not Allah speak to us or a sign come to us?" Even thus said those before them, the like of what they say; their hearts .(are all alike. Indeed We have made the signs clear for a people who are sure (١١٨

Surely, We have sent you with the truth as a bearer of good news and as a warner, .(and you shall not be questioned as to the companions of the flaming fire (١١٩

Commentary

Qur'an: And those who have no knowledge say: It refers to the polytheists and the :unbelievers other than the People of the Book. It is set in contrast with the verse ١١٣

And the Jews say, "The Christians do not follow anything (good)", and the Christians say, "The Jews do not follow anything (good)', while they recite the Book. Even thus .say those who have no knowledge, like to what they say

In this verse, the People of the Book were joined to the polytheists and unbelievers of Arabia; and the verse under discussion joins those polytheists and unbelievers to the ' :People of the Book: "And those who have no knowledge say

Why does not Allah speak to us or a sign come to us?' Even thus said those before them (i.e., the People of the Book, including the Jews) the like of what they say", because the Jews had disputed with their prophet, Musa (a.s.) and demanded from .him the like of what these pagans say

The People of

the Book and the pagans of Arabia are alike in their way of thinking; the former say .the like of what the latter say, and vice versa: their hearts are all alike

Qur'an: Indeed We have made the signs clear for a people who are sure: It is the rebuttal of the demand of those who have no knowledge. The signs they are demanding have already come to them, already been made clear to them. But they cannot benefit from them because only those who are sure of those signs may get .their benefit

As for these people who have no knowledge, their hearts are submerged into ignorance, sick with the disease of prejudice and envy. That is why they have lost the .ability to benefit from the signs sent by Allah

The above explanation makes it clear why they have been described as "those who ."have no knowledge

After exposing the falsity of their demand, Allah directs His speech to the Apostle, declaring in clear terms that he has surely been sent by Allah "with the truth as a bearer of good news and as a warner". The verse was meant to bring comfort to the Prophet's heart and to make him realize that these adversaries were the people of .the Fire, and they would not come to the path of guidance

Qur'an: and you shall not be questioned as the companions of the flaming fire: Its import is similar to that of the verse: Surely those who disbelieve alike is to them whether

.(you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe (۲:۶

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۱۲۰ – ۱۲۳

point

(۱۲۰) وَلَن تَرْضَىٰ عَنكَ الْيَهُودُ وَلَا النَّصَارَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ ۗ قُلْ إِنَّ هُدَى اللَّهِ هُوَ الْهُدَىٰ ۗ وَلَئِنِ اتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُم بَعْدَ الَّذِي جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ ۙ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِن وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ

(۱۲۱) الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَتْلُونَهُ حَقَّ تِلَاوَتِهِ أُولَٰئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ ۗ وَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

(۱۲۲) يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنِّي فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

(۱۲۳) وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا لَّا تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَن نَّفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلَا تَنفَعُهَا شَفَاعَةٌ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ

And the Jews will not be pleased with you, nor the Christians until you follow their religion. Say; "Surely Allah's guidance, that is the (true) guidance". And if you follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, you shall have no guardian .(from Allah, nor any helper (۱۲۰

Those to whom We have given the Book read it as it aught to be read. These (it is .(who) believe in it; and whoever disbelieves in it, these it is that are the losers (۱۲۱

O Children of Israel, call to mind My bounty which I bestowed on you and that I made .(you excel the nations (۱۲۲

And be on your guard against a day when no soul shall avail another in the least neither shall any compensation be accepted from it, nor shall intercession profit it nor .(shall they be helped (۱۲۳

Commentary

Qur'an: And the Jews will not be pleased with you, nor the Christians...: The Speaker turns again

to the two groups, after a cursory glance at the others. These two verses give the .sum and substance of the foregoing talk

After all those admonitions and reprimands of the Jews and the Christians, Allah turns to His Apostle and says: They will never be pleased with you until you follow their religion which they have invented according to their desires, composed of their own .opinions

Then He orders him to confute their views and tell them: "Surely Allah's guidance, that is the (true) guidance". Why should a man follow the other for guidance? And the only .guidance is the guidance of Allah; that is the truth which must be followed

There is no guidance in any thing else; and certainly not in your religion. And what is .that religion? Just an amalgam of your desires glorified as religion

Allah's guidance" stands for the Qur'an - revealed by Allah and, therefore, attributed" to Him. The sentence, "Surely Allah's guidance is the (true) guidance", restricts the guidance to that of Allah. Conversely, it means' that their religion is devoid of .guidance; in other words, it is just a set of their desires

It follows that what the Prophet has got is knowledge, and what they hold in their hands is ignorance. Therefore, Allah says to the Prophet: "And if you follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, you shall have no guardian from ".Allah, nor any helper

:One cannot help admiring this verse

;How logical, solid and well-grounded is the argument it offers

how many fine points of eloquence it holds, in spite of its brevity; how lovely is the !!language and how clear is the style

Qur’an: Those to whom We have given the Book…: The restriction of the clause, “These (it is who) believe in it”, gives rise to the belief that this verse is a reply to an unspoken question. The preceding words, “And the Jews will not be pleased with you, nor the Christians…”, gave an indication that there was no hope of their believing in .the Prophet

If so, then how any of them could be expected to believe? Was it not in vain to invite them to Islam? This verse clears the air, and says: Those to whom We have given the Book (i.e., the Torah or the Injil) and who read it as it aught to be read, these it is who truly believe in their Book and as such they shall believe in you.(١)

Or that, they believe in a revealed book; and therefore shall believe in any other book revealed by Allah. Or that, these it is who shall believe in the Qur'an. (According to some of the above interpretations, the pro-noun, 'it', in the phrase, “believe in it”, (.would stand for more than one noun by turns

The phrase, “Those to whom We have given the Book”, refers to a group of the Jews and the Christians, who did not follow their desires, who wanted to follow the truth. “the Book” refers to the Torah and the

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١- (.Because their books foretell of the Apostle's coming. (tr

.Injil

Another possible explanation: “the Book” might be referring to the Qur'an, and, “Those to whom We have given the Book”, to the believers. In that case the meaning would be as follows: Those to whom We have given the Qur'an and who read it as it should be read, these it is who believe in the Qur'an, and not the Jews and the Christians who .follow their desires. The restriction, in this case, would give a converted pro-position

Qur’an: O Children of Israel!... nor shall they be helped: These two verses are almost similar to the verses ۴۷ and ۴۸. Here the present talk with the Children of Israel comes to its end. The Qur'an, by repeating the prologue in the epilogue neatly ties the two .ends together

Traditions

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said, explaining the word of Allah, Those to whom We have given the Book read it as it aught to be read: “They recite its verses slowly, and understand it, and act according to its orders, and hope for its promise, and are afraid of its threat, and take lesson from its stories, and obey its commandments, and desist from what it prohibits. By God, it does not mean memorizing its verses, and studying its letters, and .reciting its chapters, and learning its one-tenths and one-fifths

They remembered its words and neglected its boundaries. And what it means is :meditating on its verses and acting according to its orders. Allah, the High, has said

It is) a Book We have sent down to)

.(you abounding in good, so that they may ponder over its verses" (۳۸:۲۹

Irshadu 'l-qulub, ad-Daylami). as-Sadiq (a.s.) said about the word of Allah, read it as it) aught to be read, that: "(It is) stopping at (the description of) the Garden and the Fire." ((al-'Ayyashi

.The author says: What the Imam means is the meditation on the Qur'an

The same Imam said about the verse, Those to whom We have given the Book..., that: ("They are the Imams." (al-Kafi

The author says: This explanation is based on the principle of the "flow of the Qur'an", .and gives the best example of those to whom Allah has given the Book

Suratul Baqarah: Verse ۱۲۴

point

۱۲۴) وَإِذِ ٱبْتَلَىٰٓ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ رَبُّهُۥ بِكَلِمَـٰتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ ۖ قَالَ إِنِّى جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا ۖ قَالَ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِى ۖ قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِى ٱلظَّـٰلِمِينَ (

And (remember) when his Lord tried Ibrahim with certain words, then he fulfilled them: He said: "Surely I am going to make you an Imam for men." (Ibrahim) said: "And .(of my offspring?" He said: "My covenant will not include the unjust" (۱۲۴

Commentary

Beginning with this verse, the Qur'an throws light on some aspects of the life of Ibrahim (a.s.); these verses prepare the minds for the ones promulgating the change .direction of prayer) as well as the rules of the hajj = اَلقِبْلـَه) of al-qiblah

These stories also explain the reality of the pure Islamic religion - with its different grades and levels - looking at its fundamental beliefs, moral teachings and some rules of the shari'ah; among other things

leadership) of the people, (اَلاِم_اَمه ء = they show how Allah bestowed on him al-Imamah how he built the Ka'bah, and how he prayed to Allah to send an Apostle among them.

Qur'an: And (remember) when his Lord tried Ibrahim with certain words, then he fulfilled them: It refers to the occasion when Ibrahim (a.s.) was given the Imamah. It had happened during the end period of his life; it was the time when he had become very old, after Isma'il and Ishaq both had been born, and he had brought Isma'il and his mother to reside in Mecca, as some other exegetes also have taken note of this fact.

This timing is clearly pointed at by his words, "And of my offspring? ", when Allah told him: "I am going to make you an Imam for men." Obviously he did not know, nor did he even expect, that he would get any offspring, until the angels brought to him the good tidings of Isma'il and Ishaq.

Even when the angels told him that he was to get children, he responded to those tidings in such words as could apparently be construed to have sprung from despair and pessimism. Allah says:

And inform them of the guests of Ibrahim: When they entered upon him, they said: "Peace" He said: "Surely we are afraid of you."; They said: "Be not afraid, surely we give you the good news of a boy, possessing knowledge. "He said:" Do you give me good news (of a son) when

old age has come upon me? - of what then do you give me good news!" They said: .("We give you good news with truth; therefore, be not of the despairing" (۱۵:۵۱-۵۵

The same was the reaction of his wife when she was given that good news, as Allah :says

And his wife was standing (by), so she laughed; then We gave her the good news of Ishaq, and after Ishaq, of (a son's son) Ya'qub. She said: "O woe to me! Shall I bear a son when I am an (extremely) old (woman) and this my husband an (extremely) old (man)? Most surely this is an amazing thing." They said: "Do you wonder at the decree of Allah? The mercy of Allah and His blessings be on you, O people of the house, surely .(He is Praised, Glorious" (۱۱:۷۱-۷۳

As you see, the talks of both Ibrahim and his wife show that by that time they had lost all hope of getting any child. That is why the angels replied to them in those words to .give them hope and make them happy

Clearly neither he nor his wife knew before that time that they would be given any off-spring. But on this occasion, we see that as soon as Allah told him, "I am going to "?make you an Imam for men", he pleaded, "And of my offspring

This prayer brings before our eyes the image of a man who is sure of having an offspring. How can a man, and particularly one

like Ibrahim, the friend of Allah (who very well knew the nuances of the language), ?speak before his Lord about a thing he knew nothing about

If he had uttered these words before getting any children, it would have been necessary for him to add some proviso, like "if Thou givest me any offspring". This event, therefore, must have taken place in the end period of Ibrahim's life some time .after he had been given the good news

Moreover, the words, "And (remember) when his Lord tried Ibrahim with certain words, then he fulfilled them. He said: 'Surely I am going to make you an Imam for men' ", show that his Imamah was bestowed to him after Allah had tried him with .certain trials

These consisted of various sufferings and tests which Ibrahim (a.s.) underwent in his life. And according to the Qur'an, the clearest and hardest of all was the trial of the :sacrifice of Isma'il. Allah says

And when he reached (the age of) working with him, he said: "O my son! surely I am seeing in dream that I am sacrificing you; consider then what you see." He said: "O my father! do what you are commanded; if Allah please, you will surely find me of the patient ones." So when they both submitted and he threw him down upon his forehead, and We called out to him (saying): "O Ibrahim! You have indeed proved the vision true; surely thus We reward the doers of good. Most surely this is

.(a manifest trial" (۳۷:۱۰۲-۱۰۶

This manifest trial had taken place in the extreme old age of Ibrahim, because even the birth of Isma'il had taken place when Ibrahim had become very old, as Allah :quotes him as saying

Praise be to Allah, Who gave me in old age Isma'il and Ishaq; most surely my Lord is" .(the Hearer of prayer" (۱۴:۳۹

.And the imamah was given to him after these trials

:Now we come back to the verse under discussion

("'and "al-bala (اَلإبْتِـلآءُ) "'And (remember) when his Lord tried Ibrahim": "al-Ibtila" both have the same meaning: to try, to put to test. You give someone an order, (البلآءُ or put him in a difficult situation, in order to find out his inner strength, his spiritual sublimity; thus you bring out his hidden qualities like obedience, bravery, generosity, chastity, knowledge, faithfulness (or their opposite traits); it is only then that you may ."say, "I have tested him", "I have put him to trial

One cannot be tested except through action; it is the action which brings out the hidden qualities of a man, and not the word; words may lie but not the actions. Allah :says

;(Surely We have tried them as We tried the owners of the garden... (۶۸:۱۷

.(Surely Allah will try you with a stream... (۲:۲۴۹ ...

Now Allah says that He tried Ibrahim with certain words. This sentence looks at the "words" inasmuch as they are related to actions - they are the vehicles to carry the commands of the speaker

:to the listerner. For example, Allah says

,(and speak to men good (words)... (۲:۸۳ ...

.that is, behave with them properly

is plural of al- (اَلكَـلِماتُ) "With certain words, then he fulfilled them": "al-Kalimat" word). Of course, the word, "word", has sometimes been used in the = (اَلكَـلِمَةُ kalimah :Qur'an for a substance, a corporeal being (instead of a talk or speech) as Allah says

.(a Word from Him whose name is the Messiah, 'Isa son of Maryam... (۳:۴۵ ...

But this usage is based on the fact that 'Isa, like Adam, was created by a word from :Allah as the Qur'an says

Surely the likeness of 'Isa is with Allah as the likeness of Adam; He created him from .(dust, then said to him: "Be", and he was (۳:۵۹

Otherwise, whenever the Qur'an attributes the "word" to Allah, it means speech and :saying. For example

.(and there is none to change the words of Allah (۶:۳۴

.(there is no changing the words of Allah (۱۰:۶۴

.(and Allah desired to manifest the truth of what was true by His words (۸:۷

Surely those against whom the word of your Lord has proved true will not believe .((۱۰:۹۶

.(But the word of punishment proved true against the unbelievers (۳۹:۷۱

And thus did the word of your Lord prove true against those who disbelieved that they .(are the inmates of the Fire (۴۰:۶

and had not a word gone forth from your Lord till an appointed time, certainly affair .(would have been decided between them (۴۲:۱۴

.(and the word of Allah, that is the highest (۹:۴۱

He said: "The

p: ۹۰

.(truth then (it) is and the truth do I speak” (۳۸:۸۴

.(Our word for a thing when We intend it, is only that We say to it: “Be”, and it is (۱۶:۴۰

These and similar verses use “word” in the meaning of “talk” because the talk conveys to the hearer the proposition which the speaker intends to communicate, or the command which he wants him to obey. It is for this reason that sometimes the Qur'an describes the “word” as being complete! It is as though a “word” emanating from the speaker remains incomplete until it is implemented, and then it becomes complete, is :proved true. Allah says

And the word of your Lord has been accomplished (completed) truly and justly; there is none to change His words (۶:۱۱۵); and the good word of your Lord was fulfilled .((completed) in the Children of Israel (۷:۱۳۷

The above explanation does not go against the fact that Allah's word is Allah's action. His word and His action are not two different things, they are one and the same. Realities and facts have their own rules, and literary demands and semantic values .are governed by other rules

Whatever realities Allah wishes to disclose to one of His prophets or other servants, and whatever command He wants to impose on someone, it is His talk and speech, inasmuch as it fulfils the same purpose which a talk or speech does - it conveys .information, and proposition as well as His order and prohibition

Not frequently, the word, “word”, is used

for ideas, intentions and actions if they have the same import as "word" has. We say: ".“I will surely do this because I have already said so, and have given my word

In fact, you have never before uttered a single word about it; all that your "given word" actually means is that you do have a firm intention to do it, without any .wavering will, without listening to any intercessor

The Arab poet, 'Antarah, said: "And (it was) my word (to my soul) whenever it was in turmoil or excitement: Be at ease; you will either earn the accolade or will go to (final) rest." Obviously, he had not talked with his soul or spirit; what he means by "word" is that he had made up his mind to fight bravely, and to face the enemy without retreating from his stand; because if he was victorious, his people would sing his .praise, and if he was killed, he would get the rest and tranquility

In this light it is easy to see that the phrase, "when his Lord tried Ibrahim with certain words", refers to the difficult situations he had to face, and the Divine covenants he had entered into, for example, his conflict with his people regarding the stars and the idols, his test by fire and emigration, his supreme trial of sacrificing his son, and other .such things

Allah has not specified which tests those "certain words" refer to, because this information had no-thing to do with the theme of the

verse. But one thing is certain: As it was only after the fulfillment of those words that Allah said to him, “Surely I am going to make you an Imam for men”, the words must have been such as to prove his capability for the status of the Imamah.

This much about the “words”. Now comes the next phrase: “then he fulfilled them”. If the pronoun “he” refers to Ibrahim (a.s.), then it would mean that he fulfilled the task which was expected of him, he obediently did what he was told to do.

If on the other hand the pronoun refers to the Lord (as it obviously does) then it would mean that his Lord helped him to do what was expected of him.

Somebody has said that the phrase, “certain words”, refers to the Divine Speech, “Surely I am going to make you an Imam for men… My covenant will not include the unjust.” But it is an explanation which does not carry any weight, because nowhere in the Qur'an the word “words” has been used for “sentences”.

Qur’an: “Surely I am going to make you an Imam for men”: That is, I am going to make you a leader for men; they will adhere to you and follow in your footsteps, in words and deeds. al-Imam (اَلإِمـَامُ = leader) is the one whom the people follow.

That is why many exegetes have said that al-Imamah (اَلإِمـَامَةُ = leadership) in this verse means prophethood, because a prophet is followed

:and obeyed by his ummah in their religion; Allah has said

And We did not send any apostle but that he should be obeyed by Allah's permission .((۴:۶۴

...:But this interpretation has no leg to stand upon. Because

Imam, leader) is the second accusative of the = اِم_اَم_اً) First: The word Imaman literally, maker of you; translated here as "going to make = جَاعِل_ُك_َ) causative ja'iluka you"), which is a nomen agentis; and a nomen agentis is never used in place of a past tense; if used in place of a verb it always gives the meaning of present or future .tense

When Allah used these words in His talk with Ibrahim (a.s.), He in effect gave him a promise to make him an Imam in future - in other words, to give him a status which he did not have at that time. And Ibrahim (a.s.) was already a prophet: Remember that .this talk itself was a revelation sent to him in his capacity as a prophet

He was a prophet long before he was given the status of the Imamah. There-fore, the Imamah in this verse cannot mean prophethood. (This reply is given by another (.exegete

Second: We have described earlier that Ibrahim (a.s.) was given the Imamah in his later days after setting the good news that he would be given offspring, Ishaq and Isma'il; and the angels had given him that news while they were on their way to destroy the ummah of Lilt; and Ibrahim at that time was a prophet

and an apostle. He was a prophet and apostle before he got the Imamah; therefore, .his Imamah was different from his prophethood and apostleship

Why are such interpretations offered by exegetes from time to time? The reason lies in the banality - because of repeated use during all these centuries - which has .degraded the sublime meanings of the Qur'anic words in people's minds

The word, Imamah, has been debased in similar way. Some people say that it means prophethood, precedence, being in authority; others interpret it as al-khilafah (اَلخِلافَه = regency) or headship in spiritual and temporal successorship), al-wisayah (اَلوِصـایَه = .affairs

But all this is wrong. "Prophethood" means receiving news from Allah; "messengership" means conveying that message to people; "authority" implies that .others have to follow one's example and obey one's orders

Now this authority is a concomitant of prophethood and messengership; khilafah and wisayah both mean successorship to a prophet; likewise, headship in spiritual and temporal affairs is a sort of the above-mentioned authority; and all of it is different .from the correct meaning of the Imamah

The imamah implies that a man has an intrinsic quality because of which people should follow him faithfully, making their words and deeds to conform with his words .and deeds; but none of the above-mentioned interpretations brings out this meaning

Ibrahim (a.s.) was already a prophet whose obedience was obligatory for all men. What would be the sense in telling him that Allah was going to make him a prophet for ?men

Or, to make his

obedience compulsory in all that he said and did? Or, a head of his ummah to order or forbid in matters of religion? Or, a successor? Or, a khalifah in the earth to decide ?between the people by the order of Allah

The difference between the Imamah and all the above-mentioned words is not only verbal; it is the realities behind those words that differ from one another. When a man .is given prophethood, it becomes obligatory for the people to obey him

Therefore, it would be wrong to say to that prophet, "I am going to make your obedience compulsory for men although I have already made it compulsory". Nor will it be correct to convey the same idea in other words, because the same problem will .arise again

When Allah gives someone some status, he does not get merely a new title or name; bounties of Allah are not empty words; there are real things behind those words. .Therefore, the imamah has its own reality, different from other words' realities

We find in the Qur'an that whenever it mentions Imamah it puts guidance side by side - it looks as though Allah was using the latter to explain the former. Allah says in the :story of Ibrahim

And We gave him Ishaq and Ya'qub as a further gift; and We made (them) all righteous ones; and We made them Imams, to guide (people) by Our command... ;((۲۱:۷۲ - ۷۳

:and He says in another place

And We made of them Imams to guide by Our

.(command as they were patient, and they were certain of Our signs (٣٢:٢۴

Here the imamah is explained, or rather defined, in terms of guidance, and then further qualified with the proviso, "by Our command". Clearly, the Imamah does not mean any type of guidance; it is a guidance which emanates from the command of .Allah

:And the reality of that command is described in these words

His command, when He intends anything, is only that He says to it: "Be", and it is. ;(Therefore glory be to Him in Whose hand is the kingdom of every thing... (٣۶:٨٢-٨٣

.(And Our command is but one, as the twinkling of an eye (۵۴:۵٠

We shall explain, when writing about these verses, that the Divine Command (which the former verse also calls "the Kingdom") is the sublime side of the creation, with which they face towards Allah; it is pure, free from fetters of time and space, and un-touched by change and variation. It is also the real meaning of the word "Be", because the Divine Command "Be", is nothing other than the actual existence of the thing .concerned

This "command" is in contrast to al-khalq (اَلخَلــْقُ = creation) which is the other side of the things - it is subject to changes and variations; it grows by and by and deteriorates in the same way; it works within the framework of time and space. (We (.shall fully explain this theme in its proper place, Allah willing

To sum it up, Imam is a leader who guides

by a Divine Command which is closely associated with him. The Imamah, in its guardianship, auth-ority) over the people in (اَلوِلايَه = esoteric sense, is al-wilayah their actions and activities; and its guidance entails conveying them to the final .destination by the command of Allah

It is different from that guidance which only shows the way - and which is usually done by the prophets and messengers of Allah as well as by other believers who guide the people towards Allah with sincere exhortation and good advice. This second :type of guidance is mentioned in the following verses

And We did not send any apostle but with the language of his people, so that he might explain to them clearly; then Allah makes whom He pleases err and He guides whom .(He pleases... (۱۴:۴

And he who believed (i.e., the believer from the family of Pharaoh) said: "O my people! .(follow me, I will guide you to the right course" (۴۰:۳۸

Why should not then a company from every party from among them go forth that they may acquire (proper) understanding in religion, and that they may warn their (people when they come back to them, so that they may be cautious? (۹:۱۲۲

(.We shall further explain it later on)

Then Allah describes the reason why He gave them the Imamah, in these words, as they were patient, and they were certain of Our signs. (See ۳۲:۲۴, quoted above.) The criteria, therefore, are patience and absolute certainty. They were steadfast and patient in the

cause of Allah. Patience, in this verse, is unconditional; therefore it means remaining patient and steadfast in all matters and all conditions with which Allah may choose to .test the submission and servitude of a servant

And they possessed highest degree of certainty. Going through the stories of Ibrahim :(a.s.), we find the following words of Allah in the Qur'an

And thus did We show Ibrahim the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and so that .(he might be of those who are sure (۶:۷۵

The verse clearly indicates that showing of the kingdom to Ibrahim was the prelude to the bestowal of absolute certainty on him. It proves that certainty is an inseparable :concomitant of looking at the kingdom. This is also the theme of the following verses

Nay! if you had known with a knowledge of certainty, you should most certainly have .(seen the hell (۱۰۲:۵ - ۶

Nay! rather, what they used to do has become (like) rust upon their hearts. Nay! most surely they shall on that day be shut out away from their Lord.... Nay! most surely the record of the righteous shall be in the 'Illiyyin. And what will make you know what .('illiyyin is? It is a written book; see it those who are near (to Allah) (۸۳:۱۴ - ۱۵; ۱۸-۲۱

These verses prove that the “near ones” are those who are not shut out away from their Lord; on their hearts there are no rust or coverings of sin, ignorance and doubt; they are the ones who

.have absolute certainty about Allah, and they see the 'illiyyin as they see the hell

In short, it is essential for an Imam to be a man of absolute certainty, who sees the world of the “kingdom” of Allah which is based on the “words” of Allah. And we have explained earlier that the kingdom is the command of Allah, which, in its turn, is the .esoteric side of the universe

Now let us have a fresh look at the verse ۲۱:۷۳ (and ۳۲:۲۴) quoted earlier. “And We made them Imams, to guide (people) by Our command:” it very clearly proves that whatever is the subject of guidance (i.e., the hearts and the deeds), the Imam has its inner reality; he is constantly in touch with its another side - the side of the command, .which is never hidden from him

It is known that the hearts and the deeds, like any other thing, have two sides, one of the “command” and the other of the “creation”; therefore, the reality of the deeds of the men - both good and bad - is always within the vision of the Imam, always under his observation; and he has authority over both ways - the one of happiness and bliss :and the other of unhappiness and distress. Also, Allah has said

.(Remember) the day when We will call every people with their Imam (۱۷:۷۱)

We shall explain when writing about this verse that the “Imam” here means the true) leader, and not the scroll of deeds, as

some people think.) There-fore, the Imam is the one who shall lead the people to Allah on the day when hidden things shall be tried, as he leads them to Him in the .manifest and esoteric lives of this world

The last quoted verse also shows that there cannot be a single period, a single moment, without an Imam, because Allah says, "every people". (The detailed proof of (.this statement will be given under that verse

The Imamah is such an exalted and sublime position that it cannot be given except to one who is extremely virtuous by his own self. If someone's soul is polluted, even in a minute degree, by any injustice or sin, then he needs someone else to guide him back :to the right way. And Allah has said

Is he then who guides to the truth more worthy to be followed, or he who himself .(does not go right unless he is guided? (۱۰:۳۵

Here Allah puts two groups opposite to each other: one is that which guides to the truth; and the other, that which does not go right unless guided by someone else, in other words, the one which needs a helping hand to be guided aright. This contrast means that the one who guides to the truth, is rightly guided by himself; conversely, .the one rightly guided by another person cannot guide to the truth

...:It follows from the above discourse that

sinless; protected from error and sin). = (اَلْمَعْصُوْم First: The Imam must be al-ma'sum ,Otherwise

he would not be rightly guided by himself, as explained above. Also, the following verse

:(sinlessness = (اَلعِصْمَه proves their al-'ismah

And We made them Imams to guide (people) by Our command, and We revealed to them the doing of good (deeds) and the establishing of prayer and the giving of zakat, .(and Us (alone) did they worship (۲۱:۷۳

According to this verse, all the deeds of the Imam are good, he is guided to them, not by any other person, but on his own by Divine help. The phrase translated above as to do good deeds); it is al- = (فِعْـلَ الخَيْراتِ "the doing of good (deeds)" is fi'la 'l-khayrat roughly translated as infinitive verb), used as the first construct of a = (اَلمَصْدَر masdar genitive construction; and such a masdar proves that the action has surely taken :place. Let us explain it in another way

If Allah would have said, 'We revealed to them: Do good deeds', it would not have shown that they actually obeyed the command and did good; but when He says, We revealed to them the doing of good, it means that whatever they did was good and it .was by Divine inspiration and heavenly help

Second: Conversely, whoever is not ma'sum, can never be an Imam, a guide to the .truth

Now, it is clear that the adjective, "the unjust", (in the Divine declaration, "My covenant will not include the unjust") covers everyone who might have done any ,injustice, for example, polytheism, idol-worship or any other sin

.in any period of his life, even if he may have repented and been good afterwards

One of our teachers (may Allah have mercy on him!) was asked as to how this verse :could prove that the Imam must be ma'sum. He replied

Logically, we may divide mankind into four groups: (١) One who remains unjust throughout his life; (٢) One who was never unjust in any period of his life; (٣) One who was unjust

in the beginning, but became just later on; and (۴) One who was just in the beginning, but became unjust afterwards, Ibrahim was too sublime in position to ask for the .Imamah for the first or the fourth group

This leaves two groups (the second and the third) which could be included in his prayer. And Allah rejected one of them - the one who was unjust in the beginning but became just later on. Now, there remains only one group who could be given the Imamah - the one who was never unjust in any period of his life; that is, who was (ma'sum.(١

:To sum it up, the verse shows that

.First: Imamah is a Divinely-made status

Second: The Imam must be ma'sum, by Divine 'ismah; in other words, he must be .protected by Allah from sins and errors

Third: The earth cannot remain without a rightful Imam, as long as there is a man on .it

.Fourth: It is essential for an Imam to be supported by the Divine help

Fifth: The deeds of the people are not hidden from the

It is a simplified version of the argument given by al-Qadi Nurullah Tustari (ash- -١

Shahid ath-Thalith) in his Ihgaqu 'l-haqq. (Vide the new ed. with footnotes by Ayatullah Sayyid Shahabuddin Mar'ashi Najafi, Matba'ah Islamiyyah, Tehran, vol. II, pp. ٣۶٧ - ٣۶٩.) (tr.)

.Imam

Sixth: The Imam must have knowledge of all that is needed by the people for their .good in this world and the next

.Seventh: It is impossible for any other person to surpass the Imam in any virtue

These seven are among the basic factors of the Imamah, and this verse, read with .other relevant verses, leads us to them, and Allah is our Guide

Objection: As the Imamah means to guide by the command of Allah, and as that guiding to the truth is concomitant with the Imam's being rightly guided by Allah (as has been inferred from the verse: Is he then who guides to truth more worthy to be .followed...), then all the prophets should certainly be called Imams

Obviously, prophethood of a prophet comes into being only when he is rightly guided by Allah through revelation; a prophet is not guided by any other person through .teaching or advice etc

Therefore, bestowal of prophethood would be synonymous with that of the Imamah. And the objection you had put against the interpretation of the Imamah with .prophethood would be turned in toto against your explanation

Reply: What we have inferred from the foregoing description is that if one guides to Allah by His command, he must be guided aright not by any other person but by Allah Himself. But the Qur'anic verses have not shown that its contrary proposition is also true, that is, it has not been proved that whoever is rightly guided by Allah should also .be a guide to Allah

Therefore, it is not necessary that every prophet should be called an Imam. In one place, Allah declares about various prophets that they were rightly guided by Him, and .yet does not join it with the statement that they guided their people to the truth

:He says

And We gave to him (i.e., Ibrahim) Ishaq and Ya'qub; each did We guide, and Nuh did We guide before, and of his descendants, Dawud and Sulayman and Ayyub and Yusuf and Harun; and thus do We reward those who do good; and Zakariyya and Yahya and 'Isa and Ryas; every one was of the righteous (ones) and Isma'il and Ilyasa ' and Yunus and Lut; and every one We did exalt over the worlds; and from among their fathers and their descendants and their brethren; and We chose them and guided them to the straight path. This is Allah's guidance, He guides thereby whom He pleases of His servants; and if they had set up others (with Him), certainly what they did would have become ineffectual for them. These are they to whom We gave the book and the wisdom and the prophethood; therefore if these disbelieve in it, We have (already) entrusted with it a people who are not disbelievers in it. These are they whom Allah guided, therefore follow their guidance. Say: “I do not ask you for any (reward for it; it is but a reminder to the worlds” (۶:۸۶ -۹۰).(۱

The context of the above verses shows that this Divine Guidance

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This reply does not seem to meet the objection. The verse clearly says that these -۱ prophets were guided by Allah. Also, it is accepted that all the prophets, including those mentioned in this verse, guided their people aright, and that they did so by the command of Allah. Thus, all the characteristics of the Imamah were found in every (.prophet who called his people to the right path. (tr

is an unalterable firm decree; it will continue in this ummah even after the Messenger of Allah (S), and will remain confined within the progeny of Ibrahim (a.s.), as the verses ۴۳:۲۶ - ۲۸ prove:

And when Ibrahim said to his father and his people: "Surely, I am clear of what you worship; (I worship) but (only) Him Who created me, for surely He will guide me." And He made it a word to continue in his posterity, so that they may return (to God).

When Ibrahim (a.s.) declared to his people that he was clear of what they worshipped and that he worshipped only Him Who had created him, he had already achieved that guidance which contemplation and logical reasoning can produce.

Then he told them of his expectation that Allah would surely guide him. This subsequent guidance was obviously different from the earlier one; it was a guidance by the command of Allah.

Thereafter, Allah says that He made this Divine Guidance "a word to continue" in Ibrahim's posterity. This is one of those verses in which "word" has been used not for speech but for a substance - it refers to the guidance as "a word". The same is the interpretation of "word of piety" in the verse:

and made them keep the word of piety, and well were they entitled to it and worthy of it (۴۸:۲۶).

The above explanation makes it clear that the Imamah after Ibrahim (a.s.), is confined to his descendants. The sentences, "(Ibrahim) said: 'And of my offspring?'

.He said: 'My covenant will not include unjust'", point to this fact

Obviously, Ibrahim (a.s.) had asked for the imamah not for all but only for some of his descendants, and he was told that it would not be given to the unjust of his descendants. Needless to say that not all of his descendants were unjust; therefore, this reply disqualifies only one group and not all. In other words, it grants the request for a selected group of his offspring and further sanctifies it as a covenant, and on .that basis it says that the covenant of Allah will not include the unjust ones

Qur'an: "My covenant will not include the unjust": This expression shows how far removed are the unjust from the circle of the Divine Covenant (۱); therefore, it is an .example of isti'arah bi 'l-kinayah

Traditions

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "Verily Allah (to Whom belong Might and Majesty) accepted Ibrahim as a servant before making him a prophet; and verily Allah made him a prophet before appointing him as a messenger; and verily Allah appointed him as a messenger before taking him as a friend; and verily Allah took him as a friend before .making him an Imam

When He combined for him all (the above-mentioned) things, He said, 'Surely I am going to make you an Imam for men.'" The Imam further said: "It was because of the greatness of it (i.e., Imamah) in the eyes of Ibrahim (a.s.) that he said: 'And of my offspring?' He said: 'My covenant

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Its literal translation: My covenant will not reach the unjust. Note that Allah did not - ۱ say: The unjust will not reach My covenant, because it would have implied that it was within the power of man - albeit a just one - to reach the status of the Imamah. The present sentences does not leave room for any such misunderstanding; it clearly shows that getting the imamah is not within human jurisdiction, it is exclusively in the (.hand of Allah and He gives to whom He pleases. (tr

will not include the unjust.'" The Imam explained: "A fool will not be Imam of a pious." ((al-Kafi

The author says: The same meaning has been narrated from the same Imam through another chain of narrators, and from al-Baqir (a.s.) through yet other chain; and al-.(.Mufid has narrated it from as- Sadiq (a.s

The Imam has said that Allah accepted Ibrahim as a servant before making him a :prophet. This theme is inferred from the Qur'anic verse

And certainly We gave to Ibrahim his rectitude before, and We knew him fully well. When he said to his father and his people: "What are these images to which you (as devotees) cleave?" They said: "We found our fathers worshipping them." He said: "Certainly you have been (both) you and your fathers, in manifest error." They said: "Have you brought to us the truth, or are you one of the triflers?" He said: "Nay! your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, Who brought them into existence, and I .(am of those who bear witness to this" (۲۱:۵۱ - ۵۶

This story shows how Allah took Ibrahim (a.s.) as a servant in the beginning of his .spiritual journey

It is one thing that someone is a slave or servant of Allah, and a quite different thing that he is taken or accepted by Allah as His slave. Being a slave of Allah is a concomitant of existence and creation; anyone who is created and has perceiving ;faculties is inescapably a slave of Allah

.this servitude does not depend on Divine acceptance

Man, for example, owes his existence to his Lord, is created and made by Him; he may behave in his personal life according to this servitude's dictates by surrendering himself to his Lord the Almighty, or he may act rebelliously, but his submission or rebellion does not alter the fact that he is a born slave of Allah. Allah says in the :Qur'an

There is no one in the heavens and the earth but will come to the Beneficent Allah as a .(servant (۱۹:۹۳

But if he does not act as a slave should do, if he behaves in the earth with arrogance and rebellion, then he does not deserve to be called a slave or servant of Allah, .because he does not fulfill the conditions of servitude

A servant surrenders himself to his Lord, and leaves all his affairs in his Master's hands. Therefore, only he deserves to be called a servant of Allah who is His slave in .his person as well as in his action - only such a man can truly be called a slave of Allah

Allah says: And the servants of the Beneficent God are they who walk on the earth in .(humbleness... (۲۵:۶۳

Accordingly, when Allah accepts a.man as His servant, He takes masterly interest in that servant's affairs; in other words, Allah becomes his waliyy and guardian, and takes all his affairs in His Own hands. Such a servitude is the key to al-wilayah (اَلوِلایَـه ٌ = guardianship).

The verse

:points to this reality ۷:۱۹۶

Surely my guardian is Allah, Who revealed the Book, and He takes in hand (the affairs" ".of) the good

The adjective "good", refers to those who are worthy of Divine guardianship and friendship. Allah has referred to the Prophet in several places in the Qur'an as His ,servant, for example

;(Who revealed the Book to His servant... (۱۸:۱ ...

;(Who sends down clear signs upon His servant... (۵۷: ۹ ...

.(when the servant of Allah stood up calling upon Him... (۷۲:۱۹ ...

In short, to say that Allah accepted someone as His servant, is another way of saying .that Allah took him under His wilayah and guardianship

The Imam said: "... and verily Allah made him a prophet before appointing him as a messenger". The difference between a prophet and a messenger, as shown by the :traditions narrated from the Imams of the Ahlu 'l-bayt, is as follows

A prophet sees in his dream what Allah intends to reveal to him; and a messenger .sees the angel and talks to him

:The same gradual progress is seen in the history of Ibrahim (a.s.). Allah says

And mention Ibrahim in the Book; surely he was a truthful (man), a prophet, when he said to his father: "O my father! why do you worship what neither hears nor sees, nor .(does it avail you in the least" (۱۹:۴۱ - ۴۲

The verse shows that he was a prophet when he said this to his father. It was a confirmation of what he had told his people as soon

:as he arrived among them

Surely I am clear of what you worship; (I worship) but (only) Him Who created me,“ .(for surely He will guide me” (۴۳:۲۶ - ۲۷

:Then we read the verse ۱۱:۶۹ which says

And certainly Our messengers (i.e., angels) came to Ibrahim with good news. They .said: “Peace.” “Peace,” said he

This event, in which Ibrahim saw the angels and talked to them, had taken place in his .old age long after he had left his father and his nation

The Imam said: “And verily Allah appointed him as a messenger before taking him as :a friend.” It is inferred from the words of Allah

And who is better in religion than he who... follows the faith of Ibrahim, the upright .(one? And Allah took Ibrahimas a friend (۴:۱۲۵

Apparently it shows that Allah took him as a friend because of the same upright faith and religion which he had promulgated by the command of his Lord; the theme of this verse is to describe the distinction and excellence of that upright religion which so .much raised the status of Ibrahim that he was taken as a friend of Allah

although both are generally ,(اَلصِّدیْقُ) is more exclusive than as-Sadiq (اَلخَلیْلُ) al-Khalil translated as “friend”. When a friend is sincere and truthful (as-Sadiq) in his dealings with the other friend, he is called as-Sadiq; thereafter, if he turns away from all else, confining his needs and requirements to that friend only, he is called al-khalil, because اَلخُلـَّةُ) al-khullah

.means need and requirement (

The meaning of the Imam's sentence, "and verily Allah took him as a friend before making him an Imam," may be understood from the foregoing commentary. The :words of the Imam: "A fool will not be Imam of a pious," point to the verse ٢:١٣٠ - ١٣١

And who forsakes the religion of Ibrahim but he who makes himself a fool, and most certainly We chose him in this world, and in the hereafter he is most surely among the righteous. When his Lord said to him, Submit (yourself), he said: "I submit myself to ".the Lord of the worlds

In this verse Allah says that whoever turns away from the religion of Ibrahim - in other words, whoever is unjust - is a fool; then he contrasts this foolishness with Divine selection - a selection which has been explained in the next sentences as "Islam" or submission to God. (Ponder on the clause, When his Lord said to him, .(Submit yourself

piety, fear of = (اَلتَّقْوى) submission) and at-taqwa = (اَلإِسْلامُ) Then we see that al-Islam :Allah) have been made one, or applicable to one meaning, in the verse

.(O you who believe! fear Allah as is due to Him, and do not die but as Muslims (٣:١٠٢

(.Think deeply on it)

al-Mufid has narrated from Durust and Hisham from the Imams (of the Ahlu 'l-bayt): "Ibrahim was a prophet, and he was not an Imam until Allah, Blessed and High is He, said (to him): "Surely I

am going to make you an Imam for men." (Ibrahim) said: "And of my offspirng?" Then Allah, Blessed and High is He, said: "My covenant will not include the unjust." Whoever ".had (ever) worshipped an idol or a sculpture or an image, cannot be an Imam

.The author says: Its meaning is clear from the above explanations

It is narrated in al-Amali of at-Tusi (with complete chain of narrators) and in al-Manaqib of Ibn al-Maghazili (as a marfu' tradition) from Ibn Mas'ud from the Prophet :(that he said (explaining the words of Allah to Ibrahim in this verse

Whoever prostrated before an idol, leaving me, I will not make him an Imam." Then" the Prophet said: "And that prayer was fulfilled in me and my brother Ali; neither of us ".ever prostrated before any idol

Waki' and Ibn Marduwayh have narrated from 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) that the Prophet said (in explanation of the words of Allah, My covenant will not include the unjust): ("There is no obedience except in good." (ad-Durru 'l-manthur

Abd ibn Hamid narrated from 'Imran ibn Husayn that he said: "I heard the Prophet' saying: 'There is no obedience of a creature in disobedience of Allah (i.e., a man should (.not be obeyed if he tells you to disobey Allah).'" (ibid

The author says: The meanings of those traditions are easily understood from the earlier explanations. al-'Ayyashi has narrated in his Tafsir, through several chains, :from Safwan the camel-driver, that he said

We were at Mecca; and the talk gradually reached the"

words of Allah, And (remember) when his Lord tried Ibrahim with certain words, then he fulfilled them." (The Imam) said: "That is, he completed them with Muhammad and 'Ali and the Imams from the descendants of 'Ali, as Allah says: Offspring, one from the .(other" (۳:۳۴

The authour says: This tradition takes the "word" in the meaning of the Imamah; a similar explanation is given to "word" in the verses:... for surely He will guide me. And .(He made it a word to continue in his posterity... (۴۳: ۲۷ – ۲۸

According to this tradition, the verse would mean as follows: And remember when his Lord tried Ibrahim with certain words, that is, his own imamah, and that of Ishaq and his progeny; then He completed it with the imamah of Muhammad and of the Imams from his family members, who were from the progeny of Isma'il; then Allah made it :known to Ibrahim telling him

Surely I am going to make you an Imam for men." Ibrahim said: "And of my offspirng?"" ".Allah said: "My covenant will not include the unjust

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۱۲۵ – ۱۲۹

point

(۱۲۵) وَإِذْ□ جَعَلْنَا □لْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً□ لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنًا وَ□تَّخِذُواْ مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَ□هِـۧمَ مُصَلًّى □ وَعَهِدْنَآ□□ إِلَىٰٓ□ إِبْرَ□هِـۧمَ وَإِسْمَـٰعِيلَ أَن طَهِّرَا بَيْتِىَ لِلطَّآئِفِينَ وَ□لْعَـٰكِفِينَ وَ□لرُّكَّعِ □لسُّجُودِ

(۱۲۶) وَإِذْ□ قَالَ إِبْرَ□هِـۧمُ رَبِّ □جْعَلْ هَـٰذَا بَلَدًا ءَامِنًا وَ□رْزُقْ□ أَهْلَهُۥ مِنَ □لثَّمَرَ□تِ مَنْ□ ءَامَنَ مِنْهُم بِ□للَّهِ وَ□لْيَوْمِ□ □لْأَخِرِ □ قَالَ وَمَن كَفَرَ فَأُمَتِّعُهُۥ □ قَلِيلًا□ ثُمَّ أَضْطَرُّهُۥ□ إِلَىٰٓ□ عَذَابِ □لنَّارِ □ وَبِئْسَ □لْمَصِيرُ

(۱۲۷) وَإِذْ□ يَرْ□فَعُ إِبْرَ□هِـۧمُ □لْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ □لْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَـٰعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّآ□ □ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ □لسَّمِيعُ □لْعَلِيمُ

(۱۲۸)

رَبَّنَا وَ اجعَلنَا مُسلِمَينِ لَکَ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِنَآ أُمَّةً مُّسلِمَةً لَّکَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِکَنَا وَتُبۡ عَلَينَآ إِنَّکَ أَنتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

(۱۲۹) رَبَّنَا وَابعَثۡ فِيهِمۡ رَسُولاً مِّنهُمۡ يَتلُواْ عَلَيهِمۡ ءَايَـٰتِکَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الکِتَـٰبَ وَالحِکمَةَ وَيُزَکِّيهِمۡ إِنَّکَ أَنتَ العَزِيزُ الحَکِيمُ

And (remember) when We made the House a rendezvous for men and a (place of) security, and take (for yourselves) a place of prayer on the standing-place of Ibrahim. And We enjoined Ibrahim and Isma'il (saying): "Purify (you two) My House for those who make circuit and those who abide (in it for devotion) and those who bow down (and) those who prostrate themselves" (۱۲۵).

And (remember) when Ibrahim said. "My Lord! make it a secure town and provide its people with fruits, such of them as believe in Allah and the last day" He said: "And whoever disbelieves, I will grant him enjoyment for a short while, then I will drive him to the chastisement of the Fire; and it is an evil destination" (۱۲۶).

And (remember) when Ibrahim and Isma'il were raising the foundations of the House: "Our Lord! accept from us; surely Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing (۱۲۷).

Our Lord! and make us both submissive to Thee and (raise) from our offspring a group submitting to Thee, and show us our ways of devotion and turn to us (mercifully), surely Thou art the Oft-returning (with mercy), the Merciful (۱۲۸).

Our Lord! and raise up in them an Apostle from among themselves who shall recite to them Thy communications and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify

.(them; surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise" (۱۲۹

Commentary

Qur'an: And (remember) when We made the House a rendezvous for men and a (place of) security: It refers to the legislation of the hajj and the sanctuary offered by rendezvous; a place to which one returns) is = (اَلمَثــابَـهُ) "the House. "al-Mathabah .(he returned, he will return = (ثـاَبَ ، يَثـــُوبُ derived from thaba, yathubu

Qur'an: and take (for yourselves) a place of prayer on the standing-place of Ibrahim: The conjunctive "and" joins this order with the preceding sentence turning that also .into order

In that case the complete sentence would have the following con-notation: And when We told the people, return to, and do the hajj of the House and take (for yourself) a place of prayer... Other alternative, suggested by some exegetes, is to imply a deleted ."word "We said

Accordingly, the meaning would be: and We said, take (for yourselves) a place of اَلصَّلوهُ)) is deverbal noun of place, derived from as-salah (اَلمُصَلـّى) prayer... al-Musalla to pray, to invoke); the sentence means: take (for yourselves) a place of prayer and = (.invocation at the place where Ibrahim (a.s.) had stood

Apparently, the preceding sentence is a sort of introduction, pointing to the reason why prayer in that place was prescribed; that is why this sentence does not put emphasis on "prayer" - in other words, it does not say, and pray in the standing-place of Ibrahim; it literally says, and take on the standing-place of

.Ibrahim (a.s.) a place of prayer

Qur’an: And We enjoined Ibrahim and Isma'il (saying): “Purify (you two) My House...”: to enjoin, to obligate). The order to purify the House may mean to keep = (اَلعَهْدُ al-'Ahd it exclusively reserved for the worship by those who go around it making circuits, .those who abide in it for devotion, and those who pray in it

In this sense, it would be an isti'arah bi 'l-kinaya, and would imply: keep My House exclusively reserved for My worship. Alternatively, the order may be to keep it clean; .to be on guard lest it is dirtied by careless people

one who bows = (اَلرّاكِعُ) 'are plurals of ar-raki (اَلسُّجودُ) and as-sujud (اَلرُّكَّعُ)'ar-Rukka one who prostrates, one who does sajdah) respectively, = (اَلسّاجِدُ) down) and as-sajid .the phrase refers to those who pray

Qur’an: And (remember) when Ibrahim said: “My Lord! make it a secure town... ”: In this way Ibrahim (a. s.) called on his Lord to bestow security and safety as well as .sustenance on the residents of Mecca; and the prayer was granted

Far be it from Allah to quote in His speech an unaccepted prayer without hinting at its rejection; if He were to do so, His talk would amount to a vain ridicule - far beneath :the sublime dignity of His truthful speech. He says

;(and the truth do I speak (۳۸:۸۳ ...

- Most surely it is a decisive word, and it is no a jest (۸۶:۱۳

.(۱۴

The Qur'an has quoted numerous prayers which this great prophet had pleaded before his Lord for; for example, his prayer for himself in the beginning of his life; his prayer at the time of his emigration to Syria; his invocation to keep his good name alive; his prayer for himself, for his progeny and parents, and for the believing men and women; his invocation, after building the House, for the residents of Mecca; his .prayer and pleading for a Prophet to be sent from among his progeny

His prayers and the favours he asked from Allah are a canvas which graphically shows his hopes and expectations, creates before our eyes a clear picture of his endeavours and efforts in the way of Allah, and provides a glimpse of his sublime .spiritual virtues

In short, these prayers show his status before Allah and his nearness to Him. One may write a detailed history of his life, basing it on his stories and the laudatory phrases used for him in the Qur'an; and we shall write something on these lines in .(Chapter ۶ (The Cattle

Qur'an: such of them as believe: Ibrahim (a. s.) asked his Lord to give the residents of Mecca security and provide them with fruits. At the same time he realized that not all of the residents would be believers, that some of them would be unbelievers; also he understood that his prayer for their sustenance was general – it covered the believers as well as the unbelievers; and he was

aware that he had already declared himself to be separate from the unbelievers and :their idols (as Allah says about him

But when it became clear to him that he, that is, his father, was an enemy of Allah, he .[declared himself to be clear of him [۹:۱۱۴

Here Allah bears witness that Ibrahim [a.s.] had declared his separation from every enemy of Allah, not expecting even his father). In this background, as soon as he realized that his prayer included both the believers and the unbelievers, he added the proviso, "such of them as believe...", although he was well aware that, according to the social structure of this world, sustenance could not be given only to the believing .group, to the exclusion of the unbelievers; yet he qualified his prayer

Even so, Allah knows better how He should decide about His creatures and what He should decree concerning them. Therefore, Ibrahim's prayer was granted for the .believers, and was extended to cover the unbelievers also

The reply given to Ibrahim (a.s.) implies that Allah would give them sustenance according to the system He has created in this world; in other words, believers and unbelievers both would be given their livelihood, because restricting it to the believers .would entail unnecessarily breaking the usual and established system

Ibrahim (a.s.) could have said: and provide the believers of this town with fruits; but he did not, because what he wanted to ask was an attraction, a dignity, for the town which would be centred around the Sacred

.House of Allah

That House was built in a valley devoid of every agricultural produce; and if it were not provided with fruits and food-stuff, nobody would settle in it, and the place would .remain uninhabited

Qur'an: "And whoever disbelieves, I will grant him enjoyment for a short while: The and (أُمْتِعُـهُ) word translated, "I will grant him enjoyment", has been read umti'uhu and at-taf- (اَلإفعْـال) from the verbal noun's paradigms al-if'al (أُمَـتِّـعُـهُ) umatti'uhu .respectively. Meaning of both readings is the same (اَلتَّفْعِيلُ)'il

Qur'an: then I will drive him to the chastisement... ": It further shows the great dignity of the House and is meant to give even more pleasure to Ibrahim (a.s.). The import of :the verse is as follows

I have granted your prayer (to increase this House's honour by giving sustenance to its believing residents) and have decided to include even the unbelievers in that livelihood; but the unbelievers should not be deluded by that; they should not think that the sustenance comes to them because they have got any honour in the eyes of Allah; it is actually in honour of this town, because I have accepted your prayer and given you more than you had asked. As for the unbeliever, I will surely drive him to the .chastisement of the Fire and it is an evil destination

Qur'an: And (remember) when Ibrahim and Isma'il were raising the foundations of the which literally means that part (اَلقَاعِدَةُ) is plural of al-ga'idah (اَلقَوَاعِدُ) House: al-Qawa'id of building

which “sits” in the earth'; hence it has been translated as foundation, upon which the .rest of the building is raised

Raising the foundations” is an allegorical expression, it counts the walls (which were“ raised upon foundations) as a part of the foundation; another allegorical aspect is to ascribe the rise to the foundations alone without mentioning the walls, although it were the walls which were raised. The words “of the House”, point to the intended .allegory

Qur’an: “Our. Lord! accept from us; surely Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing: The prayer comes direct from Ibrahim and Isma'il, without any introductory clause like .“They said” or “They prayed”; such a clause is not even implied here

When we read the words, “when Ibrahim and Isma'il were raising the foundations of the House”, the scene is flashed before our eyes; it is as though we see them busy building the walls, and then we dramatically hear their voices and their prayer directly .from them – there is no need of any intermediary to report to us what they said or did

Such dramatic presentation is often used in the Qur'an, and it is among its most beautiful styles – and all its styles are beautiful. It presents the story in the most effective way, bringing it within the purview of our senses. It is a style which .surpasses all manners of narration and reporting

Ibrahim and Isma'il did not mention the thing or action which they prayed to Allah to accept, that is, they did not

say, accept from us this construction' of Thy House. It shows their humbleness and humility before their Lord; they thought that it was a very insignificant work on their part and was not worthy of their Lord.

This omission of the object has given the following connotation to their prayer: Our Lord! accept from us this in-significant deed, although it is not worthy of Thy name; surely Thou art hearing our prayers, knowing our intentions.

Qur'an: Our Lord! And make us both submissive to thee and (raise) from our offspring a group submitting to Thee. The words translated here as submissive and submitting are muslim (مُسْلِم) and its feminine muslimah (مُسْلِمَه), respectively.

Obviously, the definition of Islam, with which we are familiar, and which comes to our minds as soon as we hear the word, Islam, is just the elementary grade of servitude; it distinguishes a professed convert from the one who openly rejects the faith. This elementary Islam means professing the matters of faith and doing necessary deeds, no matter whether it is done with true belief or hypo-critically.

Now, Ibrahim (a.s.) was a prophet, a messenger and one of the five ulu 'l-'azm apostles, who gave us the upright faith. It is unthinkable that such a great prophet had not attained, at the time when he was praying, this most elementary grade of Islam.

Likewise, his son, Isma'il (a.s.), was a messenger of Allah and had been offered as sacrifice in His way. Can it be said that they had got that much

Islam but were unaware of it? Or that, although they were aware of having attained ?to that Islam but wanted to continue on it

Just look at the context of the prayer: Those who prayed were so near to Allah; they were praying while building His Sacred House; they knew whom they were praying to, .and who He was and how great His splendour is

Could they, in that position, ask for such a trivial grade from the Lord Almighty? Moreover, this grade of Islam is among those things which are within the power of :man himself; and that is why man can be ordered to accept it; as Allah says

When his Lord said to him: "Be a Muslim", he said: "I submit myself to the Lord of the .(worlds" (۲:۱۳۱

Obviously, such a quality or action cannot be attributed to Allah; likewise, it is meaningless to ask from Allah to do a work which has been placed within the power of the man himself. (Of course, it may be done if there is some special condition which (.makes Divine interference justifiable

Therefore, the Islam they had asked for was not that Islam whose definition we are :familiar with. Islam has many grades, as may be see in the verse quoted above

When his Lord said to him (i.e., Ibrahim): "Be a Muslim", he said: "I submit myself to the .(Lord of the worlds" (۲:۱۳۱

Ibrahim (a.s.) was ordered to be a Muslim at a time when he was already a Muslim. Clearly, the Islam which

he was told to attain was other than the Islam he had already attained. There are .many such examples in the Qur'an

This sublime grade of Islam – which we shall explain in detail later on – means total servitude, unconditional surrender of all a servant has got to his Master. No doubt it is .within a man's power to prepare the conditions facilitating its attainment

Yet, when we look at an average man and the usual condition of his heart and mind, such a high standard seems beyond his power to attain. In other words, it is not .possible for him – in the conditions surrounding him – to get to that sublime Islam

From this point of view, that Islam is not different from other positions of al-wilayah friendship of Allah) and its lofty stages, or from other grades of perfection – all = (اَلوِلايَهُ of them are beyond the reach of an average man, because he cannot fulfil their .necessary conditions

In this sense, it is possible to count that Islam as a Divine gift which is beyond a man's power to attain by himself. Consequently, it is perfectly right for a man to pray to Allah .to bestow on him that sublime quality and make him a Muslim of that high rank

Moreover, there is another deeper connotations: It is only actions which are attributed to man and emanate from his free will and power; as for his attributes and ,(deep-rooted traits (which are etched on his psyche by repeated actions

.they are in fact beyond his power

Therefore, they may be - or let us say, should be - attributed to Allah, especially if they are good and virtuous attributes which should better be attributed to Allah rather :than to man. This observation is based on the style used in the Qur'an. For example

;(My Lord! make me keep up prayer, and from my off-spring (too) " (۱۴:۴۰"

;(and join me with the good ones" (۲۶:۸۳ ..."

My Lord! grant me that I should be grateful for Thy bounty which Thou has bestowed" on me and on my parents, and that I should do good such as Thou art pleased with, ;(and make me enter, by Thy mercy, into Thy servants, the good ones" (۲۷:۱۹

Our Lord! and make us both submissive to Thee and (raise) from our offspring a" .(group submitting to Thee (۲:۱۲۸

It is now clear that the Islam which Ibrahim and Isma'il had asked for was something :different from the Islam to which the verse ۴۹:۱۴ refers

The dwellers of the desert say: "We believe." Say: "You do not believe but say: 'We ".submit (we accept Islam)'; and faith has not yet entered into your hearts

The Islam they prayed for was of a high rank and sublime grade which we shall .explain later on

Qur'an: and show us our ways of devotion and turn to us (mercifully), surely Thou art the Oft-returning (with mercy), the Merciful: This also points to the sublime meaning translated here as = (اَلْمَناسِکُ of Islam, just referred to al-manasik

which means “worship” or “act of (اَلمَنسَِکَ) ways of devotion) is plural of al-mansak :worship”, as Allah says

.(And to every nation We appointed (acts of) worship... (۲۲:۳۴

It is a masdar used as the first construct of a genitive case. We have explained earlier that a masdar used in this way proves the existence of that work or action. Therefore, the phrase, “our ways of devotion”, refers to those acts of worship which they were doing or had already done; it does not refer to any action which they intended to do in .future

In this context, the phrase “show us” does not mean “teach us” or “help us to do”; rather it means “strengthen us by showing us the realities of our acts of worship”, as :we pointed out earlier while writing the verse

and We revealed to them the doing of good (deeds) and the establishing of prayer .(and the giving of zakat (۲۱:۷۳

And later on we shall explain that the revelation mentioned in this verse means to strengthen the doer of that deed; it does not mean teaching them their responsibilities and obligations. Probably, it is to this reality that the verses ۳۸: ۴۵ - ۴۶ :refer

And remember Our servants, Ibrahim and Ishaq and Ya'qub, men of strength and insight. Surely We purified them by a pure quality, the remembering of the (final) .abode

The above explanation makes it clear that this prayer was for an Islam and an insight into worship completely different from ordinary meanings of these terms. The

usually translated as, forgive = (تُبْ عَلَيْنا same is the case with their prayer, tub 'alayna ;(us

Ibrahim and Isma'il both were prophets, protected by Allah from every error and sin; they could not make any mistake or error; they did not need Allah's forgiveness and pardon as we do when we commit sins, (that is why we have translated it in literal .(way: turn to us mercifully

Question: It is all right to interpret Islam, showing the ways of devotion and forgiveness in the way you have done maintaining the dignity of Ibrahim and Isma'il (peace be on them both). But it is not necessary to apply the same meanings when these words are used for their offspring. Ibrahim (a.s.) did not include his offspring with himself and Isma'il, except in the prayer for Islam, and that also in a separate .sentence

They did not say: Make us and a group of our offspring submissive to Thee; instead they prayed for themselves, and after that separately pleaded for their offspring, ."saying, "and (raise) from our offspring a group submitting to Thee

There should be no difficulty in believing that what they had in mind was Islam in its general meaning covering all its ranks and grades - even the most elementary one. Even this elementary grade of Islam gives good results and is instrumental in creating .good environment in the society

It would not be wrong if Ibrahim (a.s.) asked his Lord for this Islam; even the Prophet invited people to just that type

of Islam – if they testified that there was none to be worshipped except Allah and Muhammad (S) was His Messenger, they were accepted as Muslims, their lives were protected, marriage with them was allowed and they became entitled to inherit from .their Muslim relatives

Therefore, it should be perfectly right to say that the two sentences refer to two separate ranks of Islam: "Our Lord! and make us both submissive to Thee", would ;mean the highest rank of Islam in conformity with the prestige of Ibrahim and Isma'il

and (raise) from our offspring a group submitting to Thee", would refer to the" elementary grade of Islam befitting a nation which included hypocrites and people of .weak faith as well as those with firm belief – and all are called Muslims

Reply: Position of legislation for the guidance of people is totally different from the position of praying to Allah, and each has its own rules; what is valid on one plane is .not necessarily good on the other

The Prophet prescribed a minimum standard for his ummah, that is, to utter the two testimonies of the Oneness of Allah, and his own prophethood; it was done with a view to widen the circle of Islam and to protect the healthy religious system – that .manifest Islam protected the essence of Islam as a shell protects the kernel

But the plane of invocation and prayer to Allah is much higher than that. At this level, appearances loose their value; it is the reality that matters

here; the objective here is actuality and truth, and the desire is for nearness to Allah. At this level, the prophets are not influenced by appearance. It was not because of .any worldly love of his offspring that Ibrahim (a.s.) prayed for his progeny

Had it been so, he would have prayed first of all for his father and would not have declared his separation from him as soon as he came to know that he was an enemy of Allah. Also, if he would have been concerned with appearances, he would not have :prayed in the following words

And disgrace me not on the day when they are raised, the day on which neither property will avail, nor sons, except him who comes to Allah with a heart submissive ;((۲۶:۸۷ – ۸۹

nor would have he said: And make for me a truthful tongue among the posterity ,((۲۶:۸۴

.instead he would have said, make for me a remembering tongue among the posterity

Keeping all this in view, it is easy to understand that when he asked from his Lord to raise a Muslim group from among his offspring, he did not mean the elementary rank .of Islam; he wanted for them the reality of Islam

The Qur'anic words, "a group submitting to Thee", support this interpretation. If he wanted only the appearance of Islam and not its essence, it was enough to say, "a (.group submitting", there was no need to add, "to Thee". (Ponder on this point

Qur'an: Our Lord! and raise up in them

an Apostle from among themselves...: He was praying for the Prophet; and the .”Prophet used to say: “I am the prayer of Ibrahim

Traditions

al-Kattani said: “I asked Abu Abdillah (a.s.) about a man who forgot to pray two circuit, = (اَلـــــطـ ـَّوَافُ) rak'ahs near the standing-place of Ibrahim, in at-tawaf :circumambulation) of the hajj and 'umrah. He (a.s.) said

If he is still in the town (Mecca), he should pray the two rak'ahs near the standing-' place of Ibrahim, because verily Allah says: and take (for yourselves) a place of prayer on the standing-place of Ibrahim; and if he has departed (from it) then I will not order (him to return.' ” (al-Kafi

The author says: Almost similar traditions have been narrated by ash-Shaykh in at-Tahdhib and by al-'Ayyashi in his at-Tafsir with several asnad (i.e., chains of narrators). Particulars of this rule (i.e., prayer should be offered near or behind the :standing-place - as is narrated in some traditions that

No-one should pray the two rak'ahs of at-tawaf except behind the standing-place...”)“ from; here translated as on) used in the order, = (مِنْ) are inferred from the word min ...and take... a place of prayer on (or, from) the standing-place

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said explaining the words of Allah: Purify (you two) My House...: “Keep (the polytheists away from it.” (at-Tafsir, al-Qummi

:as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: ” Verily Allah, Mighty and Great is He! says in His Book

Purify (you two) My House for those who make circuit and those who abide (in it for' devotion) and those who bow

'.down (and) those who prostrate themselves

Therefore, it is proper for a servant not to enter Mecca except that he is clean, (and) ".has washed away his sweat and dirt and has purified himself

The author says: This meaning has been narrated in other traditions also. The idea, that if the place of arrival is clean then the one who arrives should make himself clean, :may be inferred from other verses too. See, for example, the verse

.(and the good things are for good ones and the good ones are for good things (۲۴:۲۶

Ibn "Abbas said: "When Ibrahim brought Isma'il and Hajar, he settled them at Mecca; and a time passed; and the people of (the tribe of) Jurhum came to settle there and Isma'il married a woman from that tribe; and Hajar died; and Ibrahim asked permission of Sarah (to visit Isma'il); so she allowed him but imposed a condition on him .(that he would not come down (from his riding animal

Thus Ibrahim arrived (at Mecca) and Hajar had died, so he went to the house of Isma'il; and he asked his wife: 'Where is your husband?' She told him: 'He is not here, he has gone hunting.' And Isma'il used to go outside al-Haram (اَلحَرَم = the boundary) to '?hunt and then return. Ibrahim said to her: 'Do you have anything to entertain a guest

She said: 'I have nothing and there is nobody with me.' Then Ibrahim said to her: 'When your husband comes, tell him (my) salam and tell him

to change the threshold of his door.' And Ibrahim went away. Then Isma'il came and .felt the scent of his father

So he asked his wife: 'Had anyone come to you?' She said: 'An old man had come to me with such and such features (describing him scornfully).' (Isma'il) said: 'Then what did he say to you?' She said: 'He said to me to give you (his) salam and to tell you to change the threshold of your door.' So, Isma'il divorced her and married another .((woman

Thereafter, Ibrahim remained (at his place) as long as Allah wished him to remain (there). Then he asked permission of Sarah to visit Isma'il; and she allowed him, but (again) imposed the (same) condition that he should not come down (from his riding .animal). Then Ibrahim came until he reached the door of Isma'il

And he asked his wife: 'Where is your husband?' She said: 'He has gone for hunting and, Allah willing, he will come back just now; you come down, may Allah have mercy '?upon you!' He asked her: 'Do you have anyting to entertain a guest

She said: 'Yes.' Then she brought milk and meat. (Ibrahim) thereupon prayed and blessed her. Had she brought on that day bread, wheat, barley or date, (Mecca) would have become the most plentiful of all the world in wheat, barley or date. Then she said '.to him: '(Please) come down so that I may wash your head

But he did not come down. So she brought (the stone which

thereafter was known as) the standing-place (of Ibrahim) and put it on his (right) side, and he put his foot on it, and his footmark was impressed on it; (in this way) she washed the right side of his head; then she shifted the stone to his left side and .washed the left side of his head, and (again) his footmark was imprinted on it

Thereupon (Ibrahim) said to her: 'When your husband comes, give him (my) salam '.and tell him that the threshold of his door is now in order

When Isma'il (a.s.) came back, he felt the scent of his father, and asked his wife: 'Had anyone come to you?' She replied: 'Yes, a venerable (old) man, of loveliest features and most pleasant fragrance; he said to me this and this and I told him this and this; and I washed his head and this is the imprint of his feet on (his) standing-place.' ((Hearing this), Isma'il said to her: 'That was Ibrahim.'' "(Majma'u 'l-bayan

.The author says: al-Qummi has narrated in his at-Tafsir a nearly similar tradition

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "Verily, Ibrahim settled in a valley of Syria. When he got his son Isma'il from Hajar, Sarah was extremely grieved because she hereself had no child. .And she used to hurt Ibrahim and make him unhappy with respect to Hajar

So Ibrahim complained to Allah about it, and Allah sent a revelation to him: 'The likeness of woman is like the curved rib; if you leave it (as it is), you

will benefit from it, but if you (try to) make it straight, you will break it.' Thereafter, (Allah) ordered him to remove Isma'il and his mother (from that place).

He said: 'O Lord! to which place?' (Allah) said: 'To My holy place, and My sanctuary, and the part of the earth which I created first (of all the earth); and it is Mecca.' Then Allah sent Jibril down to him with al-Buraq(1); and (Jibril) made Hajar, Isma'il and Ibrahim ride on it.

And whenever Ibrahim passed a good place with trees, cultivation and date-palms, he used to say: 'O Jibril! here? here?' And Jibril used to reply: 'No, go on, go on.' (It continued) until they reached Mecca and (Jibril) made them alight in the place where the House is.

And Ibrahim had given Sarah a promise that he would not come down until he came back to her. When they alighted in that place, there was a tree there; Hajar spread on that tree a sheet she had with her, and thus they found a shade under it.

When Ibrahim arranged their affairs and settled them there, he wished to leave them to return to Sarah. Hajar said to him: 'O Ibrahim! Are you leaving us in a place where there is neither human being to keep company nor water nor cultivation?' Ibrahim said: 'Allah, Who has ordered me to settle you in this place, will suffice you.'

Then he took leave of them. When he reached Kada' (a mountain in Dhu Tuwa), Ibrahim

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۱- al-Buraq is the name of the animal which was also sent to the Prophet (S) to ride during al-Mi'raj (اَلمِعْراج = Ascension). (tr.)

:turned around and said

O our Lord! surely I have settled a part of my offspring in a valley uncultivable near" Thy Sacred House, our Lord!, that they may establish prayer; therefore make the hearts of some people yearn towards them and provide them with fruits, haply they .(may be grateful" (١۴:٣٧

Then he went away, and Hajar remained (there). When the sun rose high, Isma'il became thirsty; Hajar stood at the running-place(١), and she ascended the Safa, and mirage glittered before her in the valley and she thought that it was water; so she .(descended to the valley and ran (to it

When she reached Marwah, she could not see Isma'il, therefore, she returned until she reached Safa and again she looked (around, with the same effect); until she did likewise seven times. When she was on Marwah, in the seventh round, she looked at .Isma'il and lo! water had appeared from under his feet

She returned and gathered sand around the water - the water was flowing and she zammat) it with (the sand) which she put around it, and that is = زَمّتْ :"reined" (Arabic .why it was called zamzam

And the (tribe of) Jurhum had come down at Dhu 'l-majaz and Arafat. When water appeared at Mecca, the birds and wild animals gathered around it; the Jurhum saw this gathering of the birds and animals at that place and followed them until they found a woman and a child settled there - they were sitting in the shade of the tree

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The place between Safa and Marwah where the hajis (pilgrims to Mecca) run seven -١ (.times. (tr

.and the water had appeared for them

They said to Hajar: 'Who are you? And what is the matter with you and this child?' She said: 'I am the mother of the son of Ibrahim, the friend of Allah, and this is his son; '.Allah has ordered him to settle us here

They asked her: 'Would you allow us to remain near you?' She told them: 'Until Ibrahim comes.' When Ibrahim came to visit them the third day, Hajar said: 'O friend of Allah! there are some people of Jurhum here; they request you to allow them to '.settle near us; so will you allow them?' Ibrahim said: 'Yes

Then Hajar allowed them and they settled near them, and erected their tents. In this way Hajar and Isma'il got on friendly terms with them. When Ibrahim came to see them the second time, he looked at the large number of people around them, and he .was extremely happy

When Isma'il grew up - and each one of the Jurhum had presented one or two goats to Isma'il - so Hajar and Isma'il supported themselves with them. When Isma'il came of age, Allah ordered Ibrahim to build the House... When Allah ordered Ibrahim to build the House, he did not know where to build it; so Allah sent Jibril and he drew a ...line at the site of the House

So, Ibrahim built the House and shifted Isma'il from Dhu Tuwa. And he raised (the House) nine hands in height. Then (Jibril) led him to the

place of the (Black) Stone, and Ibrahim took it out and fixed it in the place where it is at .present

When he built it, he made two doors for it, one in the east and the other in the west; and the door that was in the west is (now) called al-Mustajar. Then he put on it tree (- a sweet smelling grass) (as roof). And Hajar put on the = (اَلأَذْخَرْ trunks) and al-adhkhar door a sheet she had with her and under which they used to sit. When he built and .completed it, Ibrahim and Isma'il performed their hajj

Jibril came to them on the day of at-tarwiyah, that is, ٨th Dhu 'l-hijjah, and said: 'O Ibrahim! stand up and quench your thirst from water' (because there was no water in to quench = (اَلتَّرْوِيَهُ Mina or 'Arafat); that is why it was named the day of at-tarwiyah .(thirst

Then (Jibril) took him out to Mina and he stayed there in the night, and Jibril did with Ibrahim what he had done with Adam. Thus, when Ibrahim completed the construction of the House, he said: 'My Lord! make it a secure town and provide its " '...people with fruits, such of themas believe in Allah

The Imam explained the fruits as the fruits of the hearts, that is, make people love them, so that they may befriend them and return to them (year after year). (at-Tafsir, (al-Qummi

The author says: This is the gist of this story, and it covers many of

the traditions narrated about this subject. Some other traditions say that there had .happened many miraculous things in the history of the House

For example, some traditions say that the House in the very beginning was a dome of light; it had descended on Adam and settled in the place where in later days Ibrahim built the Ka'bah; and that dome remained in the place till the deluge of Nuh; when the earth was submerged in water, Allah took that dome up; and its site was not .submerged, that is why the Ka'bah is called the Ancient House

Other traditions say that Allah sent the foundation of the House down from the .Garden

Yet others say that the Black Stone came down from the Garden - and it was whiter .than snow - then it turned black when it was touched by the unbelievers

Also it is narrated from al-Baqir or as-Sadiq (a.s.) that he said: "Verily Allah ordered Ibrahim to build the Ka'bah and to raise its walls and to show the people their ways of .(devotion (i.e., hajj

Thereupon, Ibrahim and Isma'il built the House, every day (the height of) a knee until it reached the place of the Black Stone." And al-Baqir (a.s.) said: "Then the (mountain) Abu Qubays called to him: 'I have something in trust for you;' and it gave him the ((Black) Stone, and he put it in its place." (al-Kafi

ath-Thawri says: "I asked Abu Ja'far (a.s.) about the Stone. He said: 'Three stones :came down from the Garden

the Black Stone which was put in place by Ibrahim, and the Standing-place of Ibrahim, (and the stone of the Israelites.' " (al-'Ayyashi

.And a tradition says that the Black Stone was an angel

The author says: There are very many such traditions narrated by both the Shi'ah and the Sunni narrators; and although these traditions are ahad and do not reach, in words or meanings, the standard required for a mutawatir narration, still they are not unique in the field of religious descriptions, nor is there any reason to discard them .altogether

As for the narration that the dome was sent down to Adam or that Ibrahim rode al-Buraq for his journey to Mecca and other such miraculous happenings which have a super-natural character, there is no reason to say that they were impossible. Moreover, Allah had given His prophets many such miracles and super-natural signs, .and the Qur'an mentions many such events

So far as the coming down of the foundations of the House, the Black Stone and the Standing Stone (which is said to be fixed in the structure now known as the Standing-place of Ibrahim) and other such things are concerned, there are many such ex... amples found in the Qur'an and hadith. Many vegetables and fruits etc. are said to be .from the Garden, or from the Fire and its out-burst

Of the same genre are the traditions of "substance" saying that the substance of the good people is from the Garden and that of the evil ones is from the

lofty place; the Book of the deeds of the = (اَلعِلـیِّینُ Fire; or that they are from al-'illiyyin prison; the Book of the deeds of the evil ones),= (اَلسِـجِّـینُ virtuous) and as-sijjin .respecttively

Of similar nature are the traditions to the effect that the Garden of al-barzakh (the period between death and the Day of Judgment) is in some specified place on this earth, and the Fire of al-barzakh in some other place in it; and that the grave is either .a section of the Garden's or a pit of the Fire's

There are many such informations which one is sure to come upon while studying the traditions. And, as we said earlier, they are so huge in number that the whole lot .cannot be discarded, nor is it possible to question its authenticity

They are parts of the Divine realities expounded by the Qur'an and followed by the traditions. The fact is that all the things seen in this material world have been sent down by Allah; whatsoever is good and lovely, or is a means to or a receptacle of good, has come down from the Garden and will return to it; and whatsoever is bad and evil, or is a means to or a receptacle of evil, has come down from the Fire and will .return to it

:Allah says

And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it, and We do not send it down .(but in a known measure (۱۵:۲۱

It shows that everything exists with

Allah, and it is an existence without any limit or measure; when it is sent down – a .gradual descent – then it becomes subject to limits and measures

This verse describes the descent of all things in general. But there are also in the :Qur'an specific examples of this descent. Allah says

... and He has sent down for you eight of the cattle in pairs... (۳۹:۶);

... and We have sent down the iron... (۵۷:۲۵);

And in the heaven is your sustenance, and what you are promised (۵۱:۲۲).

We shall further explain the meanings of these verses in their proper places, Allah willing. They however prove that every thing descends to this world from Allah. Other :verses show that they are also to return to him, as He says

And that to your Lord is the end goal (۵۳:۴۲);

Surely to your Lord is the return (۹۶:۸);

... to Him is the eventual coming (۴۰:۳);

... now surely to Allah do all affairs eventually come (۴۲:۵۳).

.There are many verses in the Qur'an of the same connotation

Also, Allah has made it clear that every thing – and all things presently are in middle of their journey – follows a course demanded by its origin, and that origin has some :effect on its success and failure, its good and evil, as the Qur'an says

Say: "Every one acts according to his own manner..." (۱۷:۸۴);

And every one has a direction to which he should turn... (۲:۱۴۸).

We shall explain all these verses in their places; here they have been quoted just to

.complete the picture, and make the subject of our discussion clearer

What these verses prove is this: There is reason to believe that the traditions which say about a material thing that it came down from the Garden or from the Fire (when that thing has some connection with the next life's happiness or unhappiness) are on the whole correct, because they are, generally speaking, in conformity with the Qur'anic principles - although it does not mean that each and every such tradition is .correct or trustworthy. Ponder on this point

Someone has said: "The Divine words: And (remember) when Ibrahim and Isma'il were raising the foundations of the House..., manifestly show that the two prophets .built this House for the worship of Allah in that country of the idol-worshippers

But the story-tellers and those exegetes who followed them have embroidered what Allah had said. They have added a lot of fanciful details, as, for example, that the House was from the very beginning and Adam did its hajj; that it was taken to the .heaven during Null's flood; that the Black Stone was one of the stones of the Garden

Their main purpose was to present the religion in an attractive garment, adorning it with fascinating narratives. Such myths may impress the masses; but the people who have knowledge and wisdom know that spiritual excellence depends on Divine .bestowal - it is Allah Who makes one thing to excel the others

,The Ka'bah has excellence because it is the House of Allah, that is

attributed to Him; the Black Stone is excellent because people have been ordered to kiss it - in this respect it represents the hand of Allah. It has no bearing on its excellence whether originally it was a ruby or a pearl or some other rock; nor do such .tales add to its real glory

In reality it makes no difference in the eyes of Allah whether a stone is black or white. The Ka'bah has got its distinction and honour because Allah has called it His House, and has appointed it as the centre for various acts of worship which cannot be performed in any other place - its glory does not lie in the fact that its stones are more valuable than other stones, or that its site is the most attractive of all, or that it was .sent down from the lofty heavens

Likewise, the excellence of the prophets is not based on any distinctive feature of their bodies nor on the quality of their apparel. They got excellence because Allah chose them especially, and selected them for His prophethood which is a spiritual thing; otherwise many people in the world were far superior to them in their ".adornments and enjoyed greater worldly bounties

He continues to say: "These traditions are untrustworthy because they contradict each other and some are self-contradictory; they are unauthentic because their chains of narrators are not correct; they are unacceptable because they go against ".the apparent meaning of the Qur'an

He further says: "These traditions are

Israelite myths, propagated among the Muslims by unbelieving Jews to make Islam look ridiculous, in order to keep the People of the Book away from it."

The author says: There is a grain of truth in some things he has said: But he has gone far beyond the limit in disputation, and consequently has lost his bearings and arrived at a hypothesis much more atrocious and repugnant, Let us have a critical look at his arguments:

Objection: "These traditions are untrustworthy and unacceptable because they contradict each other and are against the Qur'an."

Reply: The fact that some of them contradict the others could be a matter of worry if we were to accept them one by one as separate independent units. But when we accept the whole in their collective capacity (i.e., when we say that the whole lot should not be discarded because, taken all together, they do not tell us anything that is against reason or against the Qur'an or accepted traditions), then it is of no importance if there some minor discrepancies between individual traditions.

But one point must be made clear here: What we have said just now, concerns the traditions narrated from the infallible sources like the Prophet and his sinless family members. So far as other exegetes among the Companions and their disciples are concerned, they, in this respect, are just like any other people; for us it makes no difference whether their talk is free from contradiction or riddled with it.

In short, there is no justification

to discard a tradition, or a group of traditions, unless it goes against the Qur'an or other authentic traditions, or the marks of forgery and lie are stamped on it. (However, when it comes to the basic religious knowledge and fundamental beliefs, the only thing accepted as proof is the Book of Allah and the authentic traditions of the Prophet and his sinless progeny; nothing else counts in this area.)

It is now clear that there are some things which must be accepted, that is, the Qur'an and the authentic traditions; and there are others which must be rejected, that is, all that goes against the Qur'an and the authentic traditions.

Then there is a third group: the traditions concerning which there is neither any proof compelling us to reject it, nor forcing us to accept it. These are the traditions which are neither impossible in reason nor unacceptable according to the Qur'an and authentic traditions - and there is no reason why they should be discarded altogether.

Objection: These traditions are unauthentic according to their chains of narrators.

Reply: The above given explanation also dispels this doubt, because weakness of the chains of narrators does not oblige us to reject the whole group, unless it is against the reason, the Qur'an or the authentic traditions.

Objection: They are against the words of Allah; And (remember) when Ibrahim and Isma'il were raising the foundation of the House...

Reply: I wish I knew how this verse proves that the Black Stone was not from the Garden! Or,

that the dome did not come down to that place in Adam's time (and there was, therefore, no question of its being taken up at the time of the flood)! The only thing the verse says is that this construction, made of stone and mud, was built by Ibrahim.

What has this got to do - either for or against - the traditions mentioned earlier. The only difficulty with those traditions is that the objector does not like them. And this dislike is based, not on the principles of religion, but on his biased views.

He does not believe that the prophets had any spiritual realities within them; he does not think that the exoteric side of religion is based on its esoteric aspect; he unconsciously is so much over-awed by today's natural sciences that he tries to find a material cause not only for material happenings but even for spiritual things - if they have even a slight connection with matter. For him, the matter rules over all happenings, not excepting the sociological principles.

This man should have pondered on this point: The natural sciences deal with the matter; its properties and its various compounds; they look at the relationship of a natural effect with its cause. Likewise, the various sociological disciplines study the social relationships among various event taking place in society.

But the natural and sociological sciences have no concern at all with the realities which are beyond the sphere of matter, outside its field of action; they have no jurisdiction

even over immaterial connections existing between a material thing and an event .taking place in the visible world

The natural sciences and disciplines have no authority or right to confirm or reject these immaterial realities. It is within the jurisdiction of natural science to say that construction of a house depends on things like mud, stone and mason; it may explain .how black stones may take the shape of a room

Likewise, sociological disciplines may describe the factors which led to the building of the Ka'bah – it may explain a part of Ibrahim's biography, Hajar's life, Isma'il's story, .history of Tahamah, arrival of the tribe of Jurhum and things like that

But these sciences and disciplines have no right to discuss what was the relation between a certain stone on one hand and the Garden or the Fire on the other; nor have these branches of knowledge any right to express any affirmative or negative .opinion about such narratives

And you have seen that the Qur'an clearly says that even material and physical things have been sent down from the treasure which is with Allah, and that they would .ultimately return to Him – either to the Garden or to the Fire

Also, the Qur'an says that the deeds and actions – which are but physical movements :and positions – ascend to Allah acid arrive at His presence

;(To Him do ascend the good words, and the good deed lifts them up (۳۵:۱۰

:again it says

,(to Him reaches the piety on your part (۲۲:۳۷

and piety is

but action or a characteristic acquired through repeated actions. It is essential for a student of religion to meditate on these verses and to understand that the religious realities do not have any relationship with material or sociological matters per se; .they depend on the facts which are beyond the reach of material disciplines

Objection: The excellence of the prophets, and the things attributed to them like the Ka'bah or the Black Stone, is not based on a material quality; it is a spiritual excellence .bestowed by the Divine Grace

Reply: What he says is right. But he should understand what is the real meaning of what he says. What is that spiritual reality which creates excellence? Is it a mentally posited abstract idea created by social needs, like the designations and offices found in every nation, for example, presidency, leadership of the party, the high price of gold ?and silver, respect of the parents, sanctity of the laws of the land

All these are subjective and imaginative abstract forms which the societies have laid down to meet their own needs; but they have no existence outside the imagination, .beyond subjective consideration

Such honours and distinctions cannot be found outside the social life which created them to fulfil its needs; and Allah is too sublime for such needs to reach His presence. Therefore, such social distinctions have no relevance to an excellence given by Allah .to any of His creatures

If the objector thinks that the excellence of the prophets is just like the above-mentioned

imaginary and unreal honours, then why should a house or a stone be denied a similar excellence? And if he believes that an excellence given by Allah is the real one, as is found in light vis-à-vis darkness, in knowledge vis-à-vis ignorance, and in wisdom vis-à-vis idiocy, then of course it would be a real and actual excellence.

In that case, the quiddity of the existence of a prophet would be different from the quiddity of other human beings - even if our senses are unable to grasp it.

And such real excellence and distinction is in keeping with the sublimity and sanctity of the Divine actions and wisdom. Allah says:

And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in sport. We did not create them both but with the truth, but most of them do not know (۴۴:۳۸ - ۳۹).

Such a distinction is real, spiritual, metaphysical and beyond the reach of physical nature. And if such real excellence may be given to the prophets, why can it not be bestowed on some other things, like the Ka'bah and the Black Stone etc.? And, may be, it is this real immaterial excellence which has been described in such words that the people could easily understand.

Would that I knew what would such people do about those Qur'anic verses which say that the people of the Garden will be given cups, ornaments and dresses of gold and silver. These two metals have no inherent excellence except that their

.price remains high because of their scarcity

If so, then why should they be used for exalting the people of the Garden? What wealth will they represent in the Garden? After all, the economics of this world will not !be valid there

These and other such Divine words and exoteric expressions are the curtains which hide the esoteric realities; they are the veils covering Divine secrets. And if such expressions are accept-able for the realities of the next world, they can as easily be .used for some facts of this one

az-Zubayri says: “I said to Abu 'Abdillah (a.s.): 'Tell me about the ummah of Muhammad (S), who are they?' He said: 'The ummah of Muhammad (S) are the Children of Hashim in particular.' I said: 'And what is the proof that the ummah of Muhammad are his family members you have mentioned, to the exclusion of the '?others

He said: '(It is) the words of Allah: And (remember) when Ibrahim and Isma'il were raising the foundations of the House: “Our Lord! accept from us; surely Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing. Our Lord! and make us both submissive to Thee and (raise) from our offspring a group (ummah) submitting to Thee, and show us our ways of devotion and turn to us (mercifully), surely Thou art the Oft-returning (with mercy), ”.the Merciful

When Allah answered the prayer of Ibrahim and Isma'il and did (promise to) raise from their offspring a submissive ummah and raised up in them an Apostle from ,among themselves, that is

from among that ummah itself, to recite to them His communications, and to teach them the Book and the wisdom, Ibrahim beseeched Allah for another bounty; and asked for that ummah purity from polytheism and idol-worship in order that the affair of that Apostle might remain firm and strong among them and they might not need to .follow anyone other than themselves

:That is why Ibrahim said

and save me and my sons from worshipping idols: My Lord! Surely they have led“ many men astray; then whoever follows me, he is surely of me, and whoever .(disobeys me, Thou surely art Forgiving, Merciful” (۱۴:۳۵ - ۳۶

It proves that the Imams, and the submissive ummah in which Muhammad (s. a. w. a.) was raised, cannot be except from the offspring of Ibrahim (a.s.), because he had (said: “save me and my sons from worshipping idols” ' ”. (al-'Ayyashi

The author says: The argument of the Imam is absolutely clear. Ibrahim (a. s.) had asked this submissive ummah to be from his offspring in particular; and the next sentence, “Our Lord! and raise up in them an Apostle from among themselves...”, show that the same submissive group is the ummah of Muhammad (S) - and the word, ummah, as used here, does not refer to the people whom Muhammad (S) was sent to; nor to those who answered his call and believed in his prophethood, because that ummah is not confined to the offspring of Ibrahim and Isma'il; the word in the present context

.(.refers to a particular submissive ummah from the offspring of Ibrahim (a.s

Thereafter, Ibrahim (a.s.) prayed to his Lord to protect him and his sons from idol-worship, to keep them away from polytheism and error - and this Divine protection is .('ismah (infallibility; sinlessness

Also we know that there were a lot of people among the offspring of Ibrahim and Isma'il - the Arabs of the Mudar, or particularly the Quraysh - who had gone astray and worshipped idols. It proves that when Ibrahim (a.s.) prayed for his "sons" to be protected from idol-worship, he did not mean all his sons; he was praying only for his .infallible offspring, that is, the Prophet and his purified progeny

These, then, are the ummah of Muhammad (S) in the prayer of Ibrahim (a.s.). Probably, it was for this fine distinction that Ibrahim (a.s.) changed the word, ,"offspring", to "sons"; this view is strengthened by the phrases following this prayer

then whoever follows me, he is surely of me, and whoever disobeys me, Thou surely" ."art Forgiving, Merciful

Note the opening word, "then", which shows that what follows is based on what has preceded; thereafter, he confirms that those who would follow him would be from him, a part of him; but then he stops and does not say anything about the opposite group, as though he does not recognize them, they are strangers to him. (Think it (.over

The Imam said that Ibrahim (a.s.) "asked for that ummah purity from polytheism and idol-worship". Actually, he had asked protection

only from worshipping the idols; but then he mentioned why he had asked for that .protection: surely the idols have led many men astray

In this way, the original prayer for protection from idol-worship became an all-encompassing prayer for protection from all types of straying and error, ranging from idol-worship to small sins - because every sin is a sort of polytheism, as we have :already explained under the verse

.(The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours... (۱:۷

The Imam said: "It proves that the Imams, and the sub-missive ummah in which Muhammad (s. a. w. a.) was raised, cannot be except from _ the offspring of Ibrahim (a.s.)." That is the Imams are the submissive ummah, and they are from the off-spring .of Ibrahim (a.s.), as explained above

Objection: You say that the word, ummah, in this verse refers to a small group of the Muslims, and not to the whole nation; you use the same interpretation in some other verses, for example, You are the best nation raised up for (the benefit of) men... .((۳:۱۱۰

But this obliges us to interpret the word in a metaphorical way - without any justifiable reason. Moreover, the Qur'an addresses itself to the whole ummah who believed in .the Prophet; it is a self-evident fact which does not need any proof

Reply: It was long after the revelation of the Qur'an and the spread of Islam that the phrase, ummah of Muhammad, was popularly used for "all those who believe in his prophethood". It is

.a later usage

The original meaning of this word is “people”, “nation”, “group”, as Allah says: and blessing on you and the people (umam = plural of ummah) from among those who are with you; and there shall be people (umam)... (۱۱:۴۸). This word is sometimes used ;even for one person

.(Surely Ibrahim was a “people” (devoutly) obedient to Allah (۱۶:۱۲۰

Therefore, it is the context or the intention of the speaker which decides how big or small a circle this word describes in a sentence. Now the words, Our Lord! and make us both submissive to Thee and (raise) from our offspring a group submitting to Thee, were spoken in prayer, and as explained earlier, they could refer to only a selected .group out of the multitude who believe in the Prophet

Likewise, the verse, You are the best nation raised up for (the benefit of) men, was revealed to show the favour of Allah on the people thus addressed; its import is to .increase their prestige and enhance their dignity

Surely, these words could be addressed to the whole ummah who call themselves Muslims. How could it apply to the Pharaohs and Dajjals of this ummah who did not leave any vestige of the religion without destroying, and who did not come across any ?religious virtue without crushing it

We shall explain it in detail when writing on this verse.) In short, this verse is like the) :talk of Allah with the Children of Israel

;(and that I made you excel the nations (۲:۴۷

we should

not forget that a man like Qarun was one of them, and surely this talk does not include .him

Likewise, the complaint of the Prophet, "O my Lord! surely my people treated this Qur'an as a forsaken thing" (۲۵: ۳۰), cannot cover all his ummah – there are among them the lovers of the Qur'an, the men whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts .from the remembrance of Allah

On the other hand, there is the verse ۲:۱۳۴, which is addressed to the whole ummah, and covers all those who believed in the Prophet and even those to whom he was :sent

This is a people that have passed away; they shall have what they earned and you shall have what you earn, and you shall not be called upon to answer for what they .did

An Academic Discourse

Ponder on the story of Ibrahim (a.s.); study his life; see how he took his son and wife to the land where now Mecca stands, and settled them there; how their lives progressed until finally the "sacrifice" of Isma'il took place and, in the last moment, he .was ransomed by Allah; read how they together built the Ka'bah

You will find that it is a complete cycle of devotional journey. It shows how a servant proceeds from his "self" to his Lord, from a far away station to the centre of "Divine Nearness"; how the journey is accomplished avoiding the vanities of this world, shunning its protection, keeping away from its desires – prestige, wealth, women and children – freeing

oneself from the intrigues of satans, not letting them pollute the purity of intention, and turning with total surrender and progressing with complete devotion to the Lord, .the Great, the High

These apparently unrelated events are in fact of an unbroken series. They are historical narratives, but they describe the stages of the spiritual journey of a servant .from self to the Lord

They teach us the discipline of that journey, instruct us in the rules and manners of seeking nearness to Allah, of reaching His presence. The more you meditate on his story, the deeper will be your spiritual understanding – you will come to know the .demands of Divine love and sincere devotion

:Allah ordered His friend, Ibrahim, to promulgate the hajj for the people, and He says

And proclaim among men the hajj; they will come to you on foot and on every lean .(camel, coming from every remote path... (۲۲:۲۷

We do not know the details of the laws of the hajj as promulgated by Ibrahim (a.s.). But we know that the hajj continued as an event of great religious importance even .among the Arabs of the days of ignorance

Then Allah sent the Prophet and he gave us the rules of the hajj as we know them. One thing is certain: He did not go against the rules laid down by Ibrahim (a.s.); what .he did was to complete and perfect them

:This fact may be inferred from the words of Allah

Say: "Surely, (as for) me, my Lord has guided me to

the straight path; (to) a most right religion, the faith of Ibrahim, the upright one"... ;((۶:۱۶۱

He has prescribed for you of the religion what He enjoined upon Nuh and that which We have revealed unto you, and that which We enjoined upon Ibrahim and Musa and .('Isa... (۴۲:۱۳

In any case, all the devotional acts of the hajj - the ihram, staying at 'Arafat, staying overnight at Mash'ar, sacrificing an animal, throwing pebbles at the pillars, running between the Safa and the Marwah, going around Ka'bah, praying near the Standing-place - all these acts commemorate the events that had happened to Ibrahim, and represent the stands taken by him and his family; and how admirable stands they were - the pure and sublime Divine stands to which they were led by Divine mercy .and urged on by the humility of servitude

The prescribed acts of worship - on their promulgator be the best of salams! - are the symbols of the stands of the perfect ones, the prophets, vis-à-vis their Lord; every act of worship is a photo which shows to us a stage in their spiritual journey to the :station of nearness to Allah, as Allah says

.(Certainly (there) is for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent example... (۳۳: ۲۱

This is a basic reality. And there is much evidence pointing to this theme in the traditions which have come down to us regarding the philosophy of various acts of worship and the esoteric aspects of their legislation and prescription, as

.any diligent scholar may find out

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۱۳۰ – ۱۳۴

point

(۱۳۰) وَمَن يَرۡغَبُ عَن مِّلَّةِ إِبۡرَٰهِـۧمَ إِلَّا مَن سَفِهَ نَفۡسَهُۥ ۚ وَلَقَدِ ٱصۡطَفَيۡنَـٰهُ فِى ٱلدُّنۡيَا ۖ وَإِنَّهُۥ ۚ فِى ٱلۡأَخِرَةِ لَمِنَ ٱلصَّـٰلِحِ

(۱۳۱) إِذۡ قَالَ لَهُۥ رَبُّهُۥٓ أَسۡلِمۡ ۖ قَالَ أَسۡلَمۡتُ لِرَبِّ ٱلۡعَـٰلَمِينَ

(۱۳۲) وَوَصَّىٰ بِهَآ إِبۡرَٰهِـۧمُ بَنِيهِ وَيَعۡقُوبُ يَـٰبَنِىَّ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱصۡطَفَىٰ لَكُمُ ٱلدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُم مُّسۡلِمُونَ

(۱۳۳) أَمۡ كُنتُمۡ شُهَدَآءَ إِذۡ حَضَرَ يَعۡقُوبَ ٱلۡمَوۡتُ إِذۡ قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا تَعۡبُدُونَ مِنۢ بَعۡدِى قَالُواْ نَعۡبُدُ إِلَـٰهَكَ وَإِلَـٰهَ ءَابَآئِكَ إِبۡرَٰهِـۧمَ
وَإِسۡمَـٰعِيلَ وَإِسۡحَـٰقَ إِلَـٰهًا وَٲحِدًا وَنَحۡنُ لَهُۥ مُسۡلِمُونَ

(۱۳۴) تِلۡكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدۡ خَلَتۡ ۖ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتۡ وَلَكُم مَّا كَسَبۡتُمۡ ۖ وَلَا تُسۡـَٔلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُواْ يَعۡمَلُونَ

And who turns away from the religion of Ibrahim but he who makes himself a fool; and most certainly We chose him in this world, and in the hereafter, he is most surely .(among the good ones (۱۳۰

When his Lord said to him, Submit (yourself) he said: “I submit myself to the Lord of .(the worlds” (۱۳۱

And the same did Ibrahim enjoin on his sons and (so did) Ya'qub: “O my sons! surely .(Allah has chosen for you (this) faith, therefore die not unless you are Muslims” (۱۳۲

Or, were you witnesses when death approached Ya'qub, when he said to his sons: “What will you worship after me?” They said: ”We will worship your God and the God of your fathers, Ibrahim and Isma'il and Ishaq, one God only, and to Him do we .(submit” (۱۳۳

This is a people that have passed away; they shall have what they earned and you shall have

.(what you earn, and you shall not be called upon to answer for what they did (۱۳۴

Commentary

Qur'an: And who turns away from the religion of Ibrahim but he who makes himself a away from; off) means = (عَنْ followed by the preposition 'an (اَلرَّغْبَةُ) "fool: "ar-Raghbah in), it denotes "to incline towards", = (فِيْ "to turn away", "to dislike"; when followed by fi ."“to desire

made a fool; became a fool) is used both as transitive and = (سَـفِـهَ The verb, safiha intransitive. Some exegetes have taken this word here as a transitive verb - according himself; his self) is its object; others have taken the = (نَفْسَهُ to them, the word nafsahu a = (اَلـتِـمْيِيزُ verb in the intransitive sense and in that case nafsahu will be at-tamyiz .specification), not an object

In any case, the meaning will remain the same: Whoever turns away from the religion of Ibrahim is a fool; he does not recognize what is beneficial to him from that which is harmful. From this verse we may infer what we have been told in the hadith: "Surely ".wisdom is that by which the Beneficient (God) is worshipped

means to (اَلإصْـطِفاءُ) " 'Qur'an: and most certainly We chose him in this world: "al...Istifa choose, to separate best parts of a thing from other parts (if they were mixed love of Allah), this choosing, = (اَلولاـيَةُ together). Looking at the positions of al-wilayah .this selection fits the sincerity of servitude

A person so

chosen behaves in all his affairs as a sincere slave and servant, totally surrendering himself to his Lord. In other words, religion is embodied in all his affairs. After all, what is religion if not total servitude to Allah in all matters whether of this world or of the hereafter, accepting gladly whatever the Lord decides for His servant in any given :situation, as He says

.(Surely the religion with Allah is Islam (٣:١٩

Clearly it shows that the position

of "selection" is not different from that of "Islam", that is, surrender. As a further proof, look at the next verse: "When his Lord said to him, Submit (yourself) he said: 'I ." 'submit my-self to the Lord of the worlds

Obviously, the adverb "when" is related to the preceding verb "We chose him". It means that Ibrahim was chosen when his Lord said to him to submit and he .responded by submitting himself to Allah, the Lord of the worlds

In other words, the verse ١٣١ (When his Lord said to him, Submit, he said. "I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds",) is like an explanation of the words, "most surely We ."chose him

In these verses pronouns have been changed from the first person to the third, and again from the second to the third. After saying, "We chose him", it would have been ,more usual to say: "When We said to him"; but Allah says

When his Lord said to him, Submit (yourself)"; then in reply, Ibrahim (a.s.) should have" said: "I

submit myself to Thee"; instead he said: "I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds". :The reason is a follows

When his Lord said to him": It points to the fact that the talk was a secret between" Ibrahim and his Lord, at a level where there was no one else to listen to that confidential conversation. Had Allah said, "When We said to him", it would have implied that the hearers of this verse were present at that sublime station and could be addressed to by Allah – after all, the audience has a direct relationship with the .speaker

Therefore, Allah referred to Himself in the third person, cutting the connection between Himself and the hearers of the verse, showing that at the level where He spoke with Ibrahim, no one else was present; the conversation between Allah and Ibrahim was a confidential matter veiled in secrecy. In short, it was a talk between .two close friends which others were excluded from

I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds". As mentioned above, the preceding phrase" shows that Allah bestowed His grace exclusively on Ibrahim and enhanced his rank by this friendly confidential conversation. But Ibrahim knew how to speak in Divine presence; he was a servant of Allah; he should not forget the dictates of humility; it was a sign of his excellence, of his humbleness, that he did not start talking with Allah in a friendly

way, did not consider himself as worthy of that exclusive proximity, of that

sublime friendship. He continued to see in himself a humble and powerless servant who is sustained by his Master's grace. That is why he submitted to the Lord to Whom all the worlds surrender, and said: “I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds.”

“al-Islam” (اَلإسْلامُ), “at-taslim” (اَلتَّسْلِيمُ) and ”al-istislam (اَلإسْتِسْلامُ), all are from the same root s-l-m (س-ل-م) and have the same meaning, that is, to submit, to surrender. These verbs are used when a man or a thing submits to another thing, in such a way that the first never disobeys the second, never goes against it.

Allah says:

(Yes! whoever submits himself entirely to Allah... (۲:۱۱۲);

Surely I have turned my face, being upright, wholly to Him Who originated the heavens and the earth... (۶:۷۹).

It is with the face that one turns towards someone. So far as Allah is concerned, the whole being, the whole existence, of the thing turns to Him. When a man surrenders to Allah, he obeys and accepts whatever comes to him from Allah - the creative matters like the measure and the decree, as well as the legislative ones like order and prohibition.

As men differ in degrees of their submission to Divine Decrees or legislations, so does their Islam.

The first stage of Islam is to accept and obey the exoteric commandments, orders and prohibitions, by reciting ash-shahadatayn (اَلشَّهَادَتَيْنِ) = the two testimonies, that is, testifying to the Oneness of God and Messengership of Muhammad,

.S), no matter whether the belief has entered into the heart or not)

:Allah says

The dwellers of the desert say: “We believe”. Say: “You do not believe but say, 'We submit'; and faith has not yet entered into your hearts”... (۴۹:۱۴)

faith, belief); and that is = (اَلإيْمـانُ) This Islam is followed by the first stage of al-iman the sincere belief in the above-menioned shahadatayn; such a believer faithfully .obeys most of the rules of the shari'ah

This first stage of al-iman is followed by the second stage of Islam. It is the sincere acceptance of all true beliefs in detail, with its necessary concomitant, that is, good deeds – although occasional slips are not impossible. Allah says praising the pious :ones

.(Those who believed in Our signs and were submissive (۴۳: ۶۹

:Also, He says

.(O you who believe! enter into submission one and all (۲:۲۰۸

These verses show that there is an Islam which comes after al-iman; obviously this .Islam is other than the previously mentioned one

This Islam is followed by the second stage of al-iman; and it is the believing, with full :details and reasoning, in the realities of the religion. Allah says

The believers are only those who believe in Allah and His Messenger then they doubt not and struggle hard with their wealth and their lives in the way of Allah; they are the .(truthful ones (۴۹:۱۵

:Again, He says

O you who believe! shall I lead you to a merchandise which may deliver you from a painful chastisement? You shall believe in

Allah and His Messenger, and struggle hard in Allah's way with your properties and .(your lives (۶۱:۱۰-۱۱

This verse directs the believers to believe; obviously the second Iman is other than .the first one

This second stage of al-iman paves the way for the third stage of Islam. When the soul is sufficiently imbued with the above-mentioned iman, and acquires its characteristics, then man's all animalistic and beastly faculties are subdued to the sublime powers of his intellect and spirituality. He keeps all his desires - pulling him to .the material attractions and transient trinkets of this world - under firm control

Thereupon, he reaches a stage where he worships Allah as though he was seeing Him - and if he was not seeing Allah, then Allah was seeing him. There is nothing in his hidden life and inner-self, that is not submissive to Allah's orders and prohibitions; he :is never annoyed with any decree or measure of Allah. Allah says

But no! by your Lord! they do not believe until they make you a judge of that which has become a matter of disagreement among them, and then do not find any straitness in .(their selves as to what you have decided, and submit with total submission (۴:۶۵

:This Islam is followed by the third stage of al-iman. Allah says

Successful indeed are the believers, who are humble in their prayers and who keep .(aloof from what is vain... (۲۳:۱-۳

It is this stage that the words of Allah refer to: "When his Lord said to

” '.him, Submit (yourself), he said: 'I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds

Sometimes the second and the third stages are counted as one. The sublime virtues, for example, being pleased with Divine Decree, submitting to the commands of Allah, forbearance and patience for the love of Allah, self-denial, piety, and love and hate for .the sake of Allah are concomitants of this stage of al-iman

The fourth stage of Islam follows the third stage of al-iman. In the above-mentioned stage of al-iman the condition of a man vis-à-vis his Lord is like that of a slave with his master when a slave faithfully follows the dictates of his bondage - when he totally .surrenders to the will of his master and accepts his likes and dislikes

Obviously there is no comparison between the ownership and authority a master has over his slave and the ownership and authority the Lord of the worlds has over His creatures. His is the real possession, the real ownership; nothing else has any .independent existence - neither in person or characteristics nor in actions

Sometimes, when a man reaches the third stage of surrender and submission, the Divine Grace takes him under its wing; he is shown the reality, and sees with his heart's eyes that the Kingdom belongs to Allah, nothing else owns anything at all - .except when Allah bestows it to someone; there is no Lord other than He

This realization, this unveiling of reality, is a Divine Gift, a bestowal by Allah, to

whom He pleases; a man cannot reach this sublime stage by his own will or effort. :Probably it is to this Islam that the prayer of Ibrahim and Isma'il refers

Our Lord! and make us both submissive to Thee and (raise) from our off-spring a .(group submissive to Thee, and show us our ways of devotion... (۲:۱۲۸

Compare this to the verse: "When his Lord said to him, Submit (yourself), he said: 'I ." 'submit myself to the Lord of the worlds

Obviously the latter is a legislative, not a creative, order. Ibrahim was Muslim by his own will and choice, responding to the Divine Invitation, obeying the orders of Allah. It .was an order he received in his early life

Now the former verse shows him, in the twilight of his life, praying with his son, Isma'il, for Islam and for being shown their ways of devotion. Undoubtedly, he was asking for something which was not in his hand; or was praying to be kept firm on something which was not in his power. In short, the Islam, which Ibrahim and Isma'il .prayed for, was of this fourth and sublime stage

This Islam is followed by the fourth stage of al-iman. It happens when the above-mentioned conditions permeates the believer's whole being, and submerges all his :conditions and actions. Allah says

Now surely the friends of Allah - they have no fear nor do they grieve; those who .(believed and were pious (۱۰:۶۲ -۶۳

The believers mentioned here must be having the certainty that nothing is

independent of Allah, and no “cause” has any causative power except by His permission. It is this certainty which insulates them from grief when a tragedy strikes .them, and protects them from fear if a danger looms ahead

It is only because of this factor that they have been praised in these terms. This iman .comes after the above-mentioned Divine Gift of Islam. Ponder on this point

Qur’an: and in the hereafter he is most surely among the good ones: “as-Salah (اَلصَّلاحُ ” literally means: capability, ability. In the Divine Speech, this word and its derivatives, (have been used sometimes for the man himself, and, at other times, for his actions :and deeds. Allah says

... he should do good deeds... (١٨:١١٠)؛

:also, He says

And marry those among you who are single and those who are good (i.e., fit) among your male slaves and your female slaves... (٢٤:٣٢)

No clear explanation is found in the Book of Allah as to what constitutes goodness of deeds. But the Book attributes to it some effects, which may be helpful in :understanding its meaning. For example

:A good deed is good for the pleasure of Allah

And those who are patient, seeking the pleasure of their Lord... (١٣:٢٢)؛

and you do not spend but to seek Allah's pleasure... (٢:٢٧٢)

:It is good for the reward of Allah

Allah's reward is better for him who believes and does good... (٢٨:٨٠)

:It lifts up the good words which ascend to Allah

To Him do ascend the good words; and the good deed lifts them up... (٣٥:١٠)

These

descriptions show that, so far as actions are concerned, a "good deed" means an action that is fit to receive honour from God, is capable of lifting the good words to :Allah. Allah says

;(but to Him reaches the piety on your part… (۲۲:۳۷ …

All do We aid – these as well as those – out of the bounty of your Lord; and the bounty .(of your Lord is not confined (۱۷:۲۰

:As for the persons, the following verses show what constitutes their goodness

And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger, these are with those upon whom Allah has bestowed favours from among the prophets and the truthful and the martyrs and ;(the good ones; and excellent are these as companions! (۴:۶۹

And We caused them to enter into Our mercy; surely they were of the good ones .((۲۱:۸۶

:Again Allah quotes Sulayman (a.s.) as saying

.(and make me enter, by Thy mercy, into Thy servants, the good ones (۲۷:۱۹ …

:Also, He says

And (as for) Lut, We gave him wisdom and knowledge… and We took him into Our .(mercy; surely he was of the good ones (۲۱:۷۴ – ۷۵

The mercy referred to in these verses is not the general Divine Mercy which encompasses everything; nor does it mean that mercy which is ordained for the pious :believers, as Allah says

and My mercy encompasses all things; so I will ordain it (especially) for those who … .(are pious… (۷:۱۵۶

The great personalities mentioned in the verses earlier referred to were "the good ones", and they were a selected

group from among the pious believers; they were “fit” for the exclusive mercy mentioned in those verses. We know that some of the mercies of Allah are reserved :for some especial groups to the exclusion of others. Allah says

.(and Allah chooses especially whom He pleases for His mercy (۲:۱۰۵

Also, this expression does not refer to the general honour of al-wilayah in other words, it does not say that Allah man-aged or manages their affairs for them. Of course, the good ones had that honour too; certainly they were among the honoured friends of Allah), as we have explained in the exegesis of the verse = اَلأَوْلِيـاءُ)'al-awliya ۱:۵ (Guide us to the straight path); but this wilayah is an attribute which is also shared .by the prophets, the truthful ones and the martyrs

If they had only this honour to their credit they could not be counted as a separate .group distinguished from the other three

So, what is the distinctive feature of the “goodness”? The answer is that Allah takes a “good one” into His especial mercy and grants him comprehensive protection from :chastisement. These two effects are mentioned in the Qur'an

Then as to those who believed and did good, their Lord will make them enter into His ;(mercy (i.e., into the Garden) (۴۵:۳۰

.(They shall call therein (i.e., in the Garden) every fruit in security (۴۴:۵۵

:Now ponder on the following verses

;(And We took him into Our mercy (۲۱:۷۵

.(and We made (them) all good ones (۲۱:۷۲

Note how Allah attributes these actions to

Himself, not to the people concerned. Also look at the fact that according to the Divine declarations, reward is always given in lieu of actions and efforts. Keeping all this in view, you will realize that the “personal goodness” is a especial honour which cannot .be earned as a reward of good deeds or by one's own will

:Probably, it is to this reality that the verse refers

:(They have therein what they wish and with Us is more yet (۵۰:۳۵

Possibly, the first clause (They have therein what they wish) refers to the reward of their deeds; and the second one (and with Us is more yet) concerns what they shall be given not in lieu of action, but purely by Divine Mercy. We shall elaborate it, Allah .willing, in the exegesis of this verse

Now look at the life of Ibrahim (a.s.). He was a prophet, a messenger of God, one of the ulu 'l azm prophets and an Imam; many of the prophets and messengers coming after him were his followers; and he was of the good ones, as the words of Allah :clearly say

.(and We made (them) all good ones (۲۱:۷۲

This verse also shows that he was made, in this very world, one of the good ones. Consider also the fact that many prophets of lesser rank were made, in this very world, among the good ones. Then why does he pray to Allah to join him to the good ?ones

It is clear from this prayer that there was a

group of the “good ones” who had gone ahead of him, and now he was praying to Allah to join him to them. Allah granted him his prayer “in the hereafter”, as is :mentioned in the Qur'an in three places – one of which is the verse under discussion

and most certainly We chose him in this world, and in the hereafter he is most surely .(among the good ones (۲:۱۳۰

:Other two verses are

and We gave him his reward in this world, and in the hereafter he is most surely … .(among the good ones (۲۹:۲۷

And We gave him good in this world, and in the hereafter he will most surely be .(among the good (۱۶:۱۲۲

If you ponder on the foregoing details, you will know that “goodness” has many ranks, one above the other. Therefore you should not be astonished if you are told that Ibrahim (a.s.) had asked to be joined to Muhammad (S) and his purified progeny (a.s.), .and that Allah granted him his prayer in the here-after, not in this world

Ibrahim (a.s.) had prayed to Allah to join him with the good ones, while Muhammad (S) :unambiguously claims this honour for himself

Surely my guardian is Allah, Who revealed the Book, and He takes in hand (the affairs .(of) the good ones (۷:۱۹۶

It is obvious that Muhammad (S) claims the wilayah for himself. In other words, the Prophet, according to his claim mentioned in the verse, had already got the “goodness”; and Ibrahim (a.s.) was praying to be joined

to a group of "good ones" who had already been given that rank, and that group was .Muhammad (S) and his progeny

.Qur'an: And the same did Ibrahim enjoin on his sons: that is, the same religion

Qur'an:... therefore die not unless you are Muslims: Death is something beyond one's commandments of the shari'ah) covers only those = (اَلتَّكْلِيفُ "control; and "at-taklif .things which are under one's control

Then why did Ibrahim and Ya'qub (peace be on them!) tell their progeny not to die unless they were Muslims? The fact is that this admonition concerned a matter which :was fully under their power. The real meaning is like this

Beware lest the death comes to you and you are not Muslims; always remain .Muslims; keep on Islam, so that whenever death comes to you, you are Muslims

:The verse gives a hint that the religion means Islam, as Allah says

.(Surely the religion with Allah is Islam (۳:۱۹

Qur'an: "We will worship your God and the God of your fathers, Ibrahim and Isma'il and Ishaq": The verse uses the word "father" for the grandfather, the uncle and the that is, all (اَلتَّغْلِيبُ) "father - and it has been used without any reason of "at-taghlib groups are equal in number; there were not more "fathers" than the grandfather and .the uncle to justify the use of this word for the whole group

It proves that the word "father" may correctly be used for uncle, as we shall show, Allah willing, that Ibrahim (a.s.) addressed his uncle

."Azar, as "father

Qur'an: "one God only": This sums up the preceding detailed description, "your God and the God of your fathers..."; it serves to remove any possible misunderstanding that his God was other than the God of his fathers - as the idol-worshippers thought ' .that there were many gods

Qur'an: "and to Him do we submit"; It refers to the subject of their talk, that is, worship. They made it clear that their worship of Allah would be totally in accordance .with the dictates of Islam. The reply shows that the religion of Ibrahim was Islam

Accordingly, the religion which was inherited by his offspring, for example, Ishaq, Ya'qub and Isma'il, and which continued in the Children of Israel and Isma'il, was Islam, and nothing else. It was this religion which Ibrahim (a.s.) brought from his Lord; .and nobody had any right to turn away from it or to call to any other religion

Traditions

Sama'ah narrates from as-Sadiq (a.s.) that he said: "The position of iman (faith) vis-à-vis Islam is like that of the Sacred Ka'bah vis-à-vis the Sanctuary; sometimes one may be in the Sanctuary without being in the Ka'bah, but he cannot be in the Ka'bah (without being in the Sanctuary." (al-Kafi

Also he narrates from the same Imam that he said: "Islam is to bear witness that there is no god except Allah, and to accept the truth of the Messenger of Allah; it is by this that the bloods are spared (i.e., lives are protected) and marriages and

inheritance are validated; and the multitude of people are on its apparent (meaning); and the iman (i.e., faith and belief) is the guidance, and (it is) that characteristic of Islam which is firmly placed in the hearts." (ibid.)

The author says: There are other traditions of the same meaning; and they explain the above-mentioned first stage of the Islam and Iman.

al-Barqi has narrated from 'Ali (a.s.) that he said: "Islam is submission and submission is conviction." (ibid.)

Kahil said that as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "If a people worshipped Allah - the One, there is no partner to Him - and established prayer, and paid the zakat and did the hajj of the House, and kept the fast of the month of Ramadan, and then said about-something done by Allah or done by the Messenger of Allah, 'Why did he not do it in another way?', or (even if) they felt (like) it in their hearts, they would become polytheists because of it..." (ibid.)

The author says: The foregoing two traditions refer to the third stages of the Islam and iman.

Ad-Daylami narrates in his al-Irshad - and he gives two sanads for this hadith which is one of the traditions of Ascension - that Allah said:

"O Ahmad! Do you know which way of living is happier and which life more durable?" (The Messenger of Allah) said: "No, O Allah!" (He) said: "As for the happy way of living, it is that in which the (living) person is not tired of remembering Me, and does not

forget My bounties, and does not ignore My rights (on him); he seeks My pleasure day and night.

And as for the ever-lasting life, it is (realized) when (the person) works for his (spiritual) benefit until the world looses its significance for him, and looks small in his eyes; and the hereafter becomes great for him; and he gives preference to My pleasure over his own desire, and seeks My pleasures, and thinks the right of My bounty (as) great (on him); and keeps in mind what I have done for him (i.e., for his benefit); and watches Me day and night whenever he is tempted to commit any wrong or sin; and keeps his heart clean from all that I dislike; and hates Satan and his whisperings, and does not let Satan establish a hold over, or a passage to, his heart.

When he acts (like) this, then I put (My) love into his heart until I make his heart, as well as his leisure and engagement, and his thought and speech, a part of (My) favours which I have bestowed on those of My creatures who love Me; and I open his heart's eye and ear, so that he hears with his heart, and looks with his heart to My Majesty and Greatness; and I make the world straitened for him; and make him hate it with all its pleasures; and I caution him of the world and all that it contains, as a shepherd protects his sheep from dangerous

.pasture lands

When it happens, then he flees from people, and transfers from the house of termination to the abode of eternity, and from the house of Satan to the seat of the .Beneficent (God), O Ahmad! and I adorn him with dignity and majesty

So, this is the good way of living and the eternal life; and it is the station of those who are pleased (with Me). So, whoever acts for My pleasure, I give him three characteristics: I teach him gratitude which is not polluted by ignorance, and remembrance that is not adulterated with forgetfulness, and love - so that he does .not prefer the love of creatures to My love

Then when he loves Me, I love him, and I open the eye of his heart to My Majesty, and do not keep My (very) special creatures hidden from him. And I converse with him secretly in the dark of night and the light of day, until he ceases talking with the creatures and sitting with them; and I make him hear My talk and the speech of My angels; and I make My secret known to him - which I have kept hidden from (all) My creation. And I dress him in modesty, until all the creation is awed of him. And he .walks on the earth (and all his sins are) forgiven

And I make his heart hearing and seeing; and do not hide from him anything of the Garden or the Fire; and I make known to

him what terror and affliction are going to happen to the people on the Day of Resurrection, and the things I will question the rich and the poor, as well as the .learned and the ignorant, about

And I will make him sleep (in peace) in his grave, and I will send Munkar and Nakir to him for questioning him; and he will not see the sorrow of death, nor the fright of the .(prelude (of the next world

Then I will erect his weighing scale for him, and will unroll his book (of deeds), then I will put his books in his right hand, and he shall read it unfolded; then I will not keep .any interpreter between Me and him. So these are the attributes of the lovers

O Ahmad! make your concern one concern, and make your tongue one tongue, and make your body (i.e., your person) alive that is never oblivious (of Me). Whoever is (oblivious of Me, I do not care in which valley he perishes." (Biharu 'l-anwar

Al-Majlisi quotes the following tradition from al-Kafi, Ma'ani 'l-akhbar and an Nawadir of ar-Rawandi, with various chains of narrators, from as-Sadiq and al-Kazim (a.s.) - :and the text given here is from al-Kafi - that the Imam said

The Messenger of Allah met Harithah ibn Malik ibn an-Nu'man al-Ansari, and said to" him: 'How are you? O Harithah ibn Malik an-Nu'mani!' He said: 'A believer in reality, O Messenger of Allah!' The Messenger of Allah then said to him: 'There is a

reality for everything; so what is the reality of your word?'

He said: 'O Messenger of Allah! I turned myself away from the world, so I kept my night awake (in worship) and my days thirsty (in fast); and (it is) as though I am looking at the throne of my Lord which has been set up for (taking) the (people's) account; and as though I see the people of the Garden visiting one another in the Garden, and as if I hear the howling of the people of the Fire in the Fire.'

Thereupon, the Messenger of Allah (S) said: 'A servant that Allah has enlightened his heart. You have seen, so be firm.'" (ibid.)

The author says: The two traditions describe the fourth stage of the Islam and iman mentioned above. There are many traditions explaining particulars of these two; and, Allah willing, we shall quote some of them in various places of this book; and they are supported by the Qur'anic verses.

Also it should be kept in mind that for each stage of the Islam and iman, there is an opposite stage of al-kufr (اَلْكُفْرُ = disbelief) and ash-shirk (اَلشِّرْكُ = polytheism). And it is known that the higher and subtler the meaning of the Islam and iman, the more difficult it is to protect oneself from its opposite kufr or shirk.

Obviously, a lower stage of the Islam or iman does not exclude the possibility of a subtler kufr or shirk.

These two principles should be kept in mind.

It follows that the verses of the Qur'an have some esoteric meanings which are applied to the situations which its exoteric meanings cannot be applied to. Please .keep this hint in mind until we explain to you its details

Al-Qummi writes about the words of Allah, and with Us is more, that the Imam said: ("Looking towards the mercy of Allah." (at-Tafsir

The Prophet said: "Allah says: 'I have prepared for My good servants that which no eye has ever seen, nor any ear ever heard, nor has it ever passed from the heart of (any man.' " (Majma'u 'l-bayan

The author says: The meaning of the two traditions may easily be understood from .what we have written about the meaning of "good ones"; and Allah is the Guide

al-Baqir (a.s.) said about the words of Allah, Or, were you witnesses when death approached Ya'qub...: "It is applied to al-Qa'im (اَلقــآئِمُ = the one who stands - i.e., with (sword to establish the way of Allah). (al 'Ayyashi

The author says: The author of as-Safi writes: "Perhaps the Imam meant that it was about the Qa'im from the progeny of Muhammad, because every Qa'im of them asks his children the same question at the time of his death, and they reply him as the ".children of Ya'qub had replied

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۱۳۵ – ۱۴۱

point

(۱۳۵) وَقَالُواْ كُونُواْ هُودًا أَوۡ نَصَـٰرَىٰ تَهۡتَدُواْ ۗ قُلۡ بَلۡ مِلَّةَ إِبۡرَٰهِـۧمَ حَنِيفًا ۖ وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ ٱلۡمُشۡرِكِينَ قُولُوٓاْ ءَامَنَّا بِٱللَّهِ وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيۡنَا وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَىٰٓ إِبۡرَٰهِـۧمَ وَإِسۡمَـٰعِيلَ وَإِسۡحَـٰقَ وَيَعۡقُوبَ وَٱلۡأَسۡبَاطِ

(۱۳۶) وَمَآ أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ

وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَآ أُوتِيَ ٱلنَّبِيُّونَ مِن رَّبِّهِمۡ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيۡنَ أَحَدٖ مِّنۡهُمۡ وَنَحۡنُ لَهُۥ مُسۡلِمُونَ

(١٣٧) فَإِنۡ ءَامَنُواْ بِمِثۡلِ مَآ ءَامَنتُم بِهِۦ فَقَدِ ٱهۡتَدَواْ ۖ وَّإِن تَوَلَّوۡاْ فَإِنَّمَا هُمۡ فِي شِقَاقٖ ۖ فَسَيَكۡفِيكَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ ۚ وَهُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلۡعَلِيمُ

(١٣٨) صِبۡغَةَ ٱللَّهِ ۖ وَمَنۡ أَحۡسَنُ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ صِبۡغَةٗ ۖ وَنَحۡنُ لَهُۥ عَٰبِدُونَ

(١٣٩) قُلۡ أَتُحَآجُّونَنَا فِي ٱللَّهِ وَهُوَ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمۡ وَلَنَآ أَعۡمَٰلُنَا وَلَكُمۡ أَعۡمَٰلُكُمۡ وَنَحۡنُ لَهُۥ مُخۡلِصُونَ

أَمۡ تَقُولُونَ إِنَّ إِبۡرَٰهِـۧمَ وَإِسۡمَٰعِيلَ وَإِسۡحَٰقَ وَيَعۡقُوبَ وَٱلۡأَسۡبَاطَ كَانُواْ هُودًا أَوۡ نَصَٰرَىٰ ۗ قُلۡ ءَأَنتُمۡ أَعۡلَمُ أَمِ ٱللَّهُ ۗ

(١٤٠) وَمَنۡ أَظۡلَمُ مِمَّن كَتَمَ شَهَٰدَةً عِندَهُۥ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَمَا ٱللَّهُ بِغَٰفِلٍ عَمَّا تَعۡمَلُونَ

(١٤١) تِلۡكَ أُمَّةٞ قَدۡ خَلَتۡ ۖ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتۡ وَلَكُم مَّا كَسَبۡتُمۡ ۖ وَلَا تُسۡـَٔلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُواْ يَعۡمَلُونَ

And they say: 'Be Jews or Christians, you will be rightly guided" Say: "Nay! (we follow) the religion of Ibrahim, the upright one, and he was not of the polytheist" (١٣٥).

Say: "We believe in Allah and (in) that which has been revealed to us, and (in) that which was revealed to Ibrahim and Isma'il and Ishaq and Ya'qub and the tribes, and (in) that which was given to Musa and Isa, and (in) that which was given to the prophets from their Lord, we do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit" (١٣۶).

If then they believe in like of what you believe in, they are indeed on the right course, and if they turn back, then they are only in great dissension; so Allah will suffice you against them, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing (١٣٧).

We have)

received) the dyeing of Allah, and who is better than Allah in dyeing? and Him do we .(worship (١٣٨

Say: "Do you dispute with us about Allah? and He is our Lord and your Lord; and for us .(our deeds and for you are your deeds; and we are sincere to Him (١٣٩

Or, do you say that Ibrahim and Isma'il and Ya'qiib and the tribes were Jews or Christians?" Say: "Are you better knowing or Allah? And who is more unjust than he who conceals a testimony that he has from Allah? And Allah is not at all heedless of .(what you do" (١۴٠

This is a people that have passed away; they shall have what they earned and you shall have what you earn, and you shall not be called upon to answer for what they did .((١۴١

Commentary

Qur'an: And they say: "Be Jews and Christians, you will be rightly guided": The preceding verses made it clear that the true religion followed by the children of Ibrahim – Isma'il and Ishaq as well as Ya'qub and his descendants – was the same .Islam which was the religion of Ibrahim, the upright one

It means that the differences and divisions, the schisms and sects, which the proponents of Judaism and Christianity call to, have actually originated from their own .desires; they are just a few toys manufactured by them

They are in great disputations, schisms and disagreements, they are divided into numerous sects and religious groups, they have dyed the religion of Allah – the

religion of Unity, the religion of Oneness - with colours of their bias and prejudice, .their desires and ambitions

But the religion is not divided; it is one, in the same way as God, Who is to be wor… shipped, is One; it is the religion of Ibrahim; the Muslims should firmly keep hold of this original religion, discarding the differences and dissensions of the People of the .Book aside

Although the life in this world looks like a constant phenomenon, in reality it is continuously changing. The same applies to all the natural world. Even the rites, customs and manners of various nations and groups are not immune from this .propensity to change

More often than not, it causes changes and deviations even in religious matters. Sometimes extraneous things are inserted in religion; at other times, an essential part is declared anathema; worldly goals and ideals replace the Divine and religious goals !and aims. What a tragedy is it for religion

When it happens, the religion is dyed in national or tribal colour, and starts calling to a goal other than the original one; it focuses its sight on innovations, forgetting its .original purpose. In a short while, the evil (i.e., the innovation) becomes virtue

People support and defend it, because it agrees with their desires and cravings. And the virtue is treated as evil; it has no protector or defender to stand for it. Ultimately, the things deteriorate to unbelievable extent, as we are seeing with our own eyes .today

However, the sentence: "And they

say: 'Be Jews or Christians' ", stands for the sentences, "The Jews say: 'Be Jews, you will be guided aright'; and the Christians say: 'Be Christians, you will be rightly guided.' ." They make such divergent claims because of their divergences and differences

Qur'an: Say: "Nay! (we follow) the religion of Ibrahim, the upright one, and he was not of the polytheists": It is the reply of their claims. The Prophet should tell them: Nay! we follow the religion of Ibrahim, the upright one; because it is the one religion which was followed by all your prophets - Ibrahim and all those who came after him. Ibrahim, ,who brought this religion

was not a polytheist. Had there been so many divisions in his religion - the divisions which were attached to it by the innovators - he would have become a polytheist: That which is not a part of Allah's religion cannot invite towards Allah, it will surely call to something other than Allah - and this is what polytheism means. The religion of .Ibrahim is the religion of unity; it does not contain anything that is not from Allah

Qur'an: Say: "We believe in Allah and (in) that which has been revealed to us, and (in) that which was revealed to Ibrahim...": After mentioning the claim of the Jews and the .Christians, Allah describes the truth - and He always tells the truth

The truth consists of the testimony of belief in One God and belief in all that was brought by the

prophets – without making any distinction between them. This is what is called the Islam. Belief in Allah was the fundamental part of that which was revealed to the prophets; yet it has been mentioned here separately. The reason is that the belief in the Creator is a natural instinct, it does not depend on prophetic proofs and .arguments

After that fundamental belief, Allah mentions “that which has been revealed to us”, that is, the Qur'an or the knowledge contained in it. Then He mentions “that which was .”revealed to Ibrahim and Isma'il and Ishaq and Ya'qub

Thereafter is de-scribed “that which was given to Musa and 'Isa”; these two have been especially mentioned because the speech is addressed to the Jews and the .Christians who call only to these two prophets, respectively

Finally the testimony includes “that which was given to the prophets”. This sentence covers all the prophets and thus paves the way for the next declaration: “we do not .”make any distinction between any of them

Note the variation in style: That which is with us and that which was with Ibrahim, Isma'il, Ishaq and Ya'qub, is listed as “revealed” to us and them, respectively; while .that which was with Musa, 'Isa and other prophets is referred to as “given” to them

Probably the reason is this: The basic idea may be conveyed by the word, “giving”, as Allah says after mentioning Ibrahim and other prophets who came before or after :him

These are they to whom We gave the book and the

.(wisdom and the prophethood (۶:۸۹

But this word does not clearly and necessarily mean "revelation"; for example, Allah :says

;(And certainly We gave wisdom to Luqman (۳۱:۱۲

And certainly We gave the book and the wisdom and the prophecy to the Children of .(Israel... (۴۵:۱۶

Now both the Jews and the Christians counted Ibrahim, Isma'il, Ishaq, Ya'qub and the tribes as following their religions respectively - the Jews claimed that those prophets .were Jews; the Christians claimed that they were Christians

They believed that the true religion was the Judaism or the Christianity that was given to Musa or 'Isa respectively. In this background, if Allah had said, 'that which was given to Ibrahim..., it would not have clearly shown that those prophets themselves .had brought a religion, which was revealed to them by Allah

The Jews or the Christians could have claimed that what was given to them was the same thing which was given to Musa or 'Isa - peace be on them all - and that their names have been mentioned, like that of the Children of Israel, just because they !followed the self-same religion

It was to remove this possible misunderstanding that Ibrahim and those named prophets (peace be on them all) were separately mentioned and it was clearly said .that they had got that religion by Divine revelation

As for the prophets who came before Ibrahim (a.s.), the Jews and the Christians did not lay claim on their religion, and there was no chance of any misunderstanding; therefore, their religion was referred to

.as “given” to them

of the Israelites has the same meaning as (اَلأَسْـباطُ) ”Qur’an: and the tribes: 'al-Asbat of the Isma'ilites, and that is, the tribes. Sibt, like qabilah, refers to (اَلقـَبائِلُ) ”“al-qaba'il the descendants of one forefathers. There were twelve tribes in the Israelites, each one descended from one of the twelve children of Ya'qub; thus each became a .distinct group in itself

If the word “tribes” refers to the whole groups, then it is used metaphorically, because the prophets who received the revelation were from those tribes. On the other hand, it may refer to the individuals, that is, the prophets themselves. In any case, it does .not include the brothers of Yusuf (a.s.) because they were not prophets

:'A similar verse is found in the Chapter of 'The Women

and We revealed to Ibrahim and Isma'il and Ishaq and Ya'qub and the tribes, and 'Isa .(and Ayyub and Yunus and Harun and Sulayman... (۴:۱۶۳

Qur’an: If then they believe in like of what you believe in, they are indeed on the right course: What Allah actually means is this: If they believe in what you believe in, then they are on the right course. But He has added here the word “like” (If then they believe in like of what you believe in...), to cut the root of disputation and .argumentation

Had they been invited to believe hi what the Muslims believed in, they could have replied - as they used to say - No, we believe in that

.which has been revealed to us and we reject what is besides that

Therefore, this verse teaches the Muslims a different way of expressions: We believe in that which contains nothing but pristine truth; therefore, you too should believe in .that which contains only pristine truth like it

Addressed in this way, they will not find any loop-hole, nor will they be able to resort to their obstinate wrangles. And then they will realize that what they have had is not .the unadulterated truth

means hypocricy, disputation, (اَلشِّقَاقُ) "Qur'an: in great dissension: "ash-Shiqaq .dissension

Qur'an: so Allah will suffice you against them: It was a promise to the Messenger of Allah to help him against them; and Allah fulfilled this promise. And the same favour shall be completed for the Muslim nation when Allah wills. This verse is a parenthetic .statement between the preceding and the following verses

) "Qur'an: the dyeing of Allah, and who is better than Allah in dyeing?: "as-Sibghah means a kind of dyeing. The verse means: The above-mentioned belief is a (اَلصِّبْغَه Divine colour in which Allah has dyed us; and it is the best of the colours - it is not a dye of the Judaism nor of the Christianity, which emanate from dissensions in religion, .when people fail to keep on the right track

Qur'an: and Him do we worship: Grammatically the sentence describes the condition; "...it gives the reason of the preceding phrase: "the dyeing of Allah

:"?Qur'an: Say: "Do you dispute with us about Allah

It is a rebuke to the People of the Book regarding their disputation with the Muslims. :The next sentences show how and why their argumentations were wrong and in vain

and He is our Lord and your Lord; and for us are our deeds and for you are your" deeds; and we are sincere to Him". When the followers dispute with each other concerning their leader, the dispute may emanate from one or more of the three :causes

First: They follow different leaders; and each wants to show the superiority of his leader over the other's, for example, a dispute between an idol-worshipper and a .Muslim

Second: They follow the same leader, but each claims a close relationship with the .leader, denying a like privilege to the other

Third: One party wants to show that the other party, because of his unbecoming behaviour and immoral character, has lost the right to be counted among the followers of the leader; his claim of being a follower of the leader is an insult to the .latter

Now, why should the Muslims and the People of the Book dispute with each other? The first reason does not apply, because both worship the same God. The same goes for the second reason, because one group's deeds do not clash with those of the ."other - "for us are our deeds and for you are your deeds

Coming to the third cause, the Muslims are sincere in their devotion to Allah. So why should the People of the Book dispute with

.them, when they have got no reason at all

In this way, Allah first rebuked them for their disputation with the Muslims, and then .dismisses all three causes of disputation one by one

Qur’an: “Or, do you say that Ibrahim... were Jews or Christians?”: Both groups say that Ibrahim and the other prophets named in the verse were from them; implying that .they were Jews or Christians

Or, they clearly claimed that they were Jews or Christians, as may be understood :from the words of Allah

O People of the Book! why do you dispute about Ibrahim, when the Torah and the Injil (were not revealed till after him? Do you not then understand? (۳:۶۵

Qur’an: Say: 'Are you better knowing or Allah?”: Because Allah has informed us and you in the Book that Musa and 'Isa and their books came after Ibrahim and the .prophets mentioned in this verse

Qur’an: “And who is more unjust than he who conceals a testimony that he has from Allah?”: That is, he who conceals a testimony, a fact known to him, that Allah has informed in His Books that the shari'ah of Judaism and Christianity were sent after Ibrahim and the other named prophets. The “testimony”, thus, refers to a fact known .to one

The verse may alternatively refer to him who conceals the testimony of Allah that Ibrahim and those prophets had passed away long before the Torah and the Injil were revealed. In this case, the ”testimony” would refer to giving evidence, to bearing witness. But the

.first meaning is more appropriate in the context of this verse

Qur’an: This is a people that has passed away...: It will do you no good to dispute about other people as to which group they belonged to; nor will silence on this matter do you any harm. You must spend your time in those things which you will be asked .about tomorrow

This verse has been repeated here because the Jews and the Christians talked (and they still do) too much on this subject - which would be of no avail to them on the Day of Judgment; especially when they knew very well that Ibrahim had passed away .long before Judaism and Christianity came into being

In other contexts, discussion about the prophets and messengers is a very beneficial thing; the Qur'an exhorts us to look into, and learn about, their teachings and their spiritual virtues; and it is with this aim that it repeatedly narrates their stories and .orders us to meditate on them

Traditions

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) said about the verse: Say: Nay! (we follow) the religion of Ibrahim...: “Verily, the upright religion is the Islam.” (al- 'Ayyashi (

al-Baqir (a.s.) said: “The upright religion (of Ibrahim, a.s.) did not leave anything (unguided), so much so that it includes the trimming of the moustache, and cutting of nails, and circumcision.” (ibid.)

Allah revealed the upright (religion) to Ibrahim, and it is cleanliness; and it is (made up“ of) ten (things), five (of them) in the head and (the other) five in the (rest

:of the) body. As for those which are in the head, they are

Trimming of the moustache, and letting the beard grow, and dressing the hair, and brushing the teeth, and (using) the tooth-pick; and as for those which are in the (rest of the) body, they are: removing the hair from the body, and circumcision, and cutting the nails, and the bath of al - janabah (a:. = the ritual uncleanliness resulting from .sexual intercourse or ejaculation), and cleansing (the body) with water

And this is the pure upright (religion) which Ibrahim (a.s.) brought; it was never abrogated, nor will it ever be abrogated until the Day of Resurrection." (at-Tafsir, al-(Qummi

The author says: Dressing the hair means to trim it and grow it. There are a lot of .traditions of the same or similar meaning, narrated by both sects in their books

al-Baqir (a.s.) said about the words of Allah: Say: We believe in Allah...: "Allah has meant Ali, and Fatimah, and al-Hasan, and al-Husayn, in this verse; and after them it (has continued in the Imams..." (al-Kafi; al-'Ayyashi

The author says: This theme may be inferred from the words, and (raise) from our offspring a group submitting to Thee (۲:۱۲۸), which were used in the invocation of Ibrahim (a.s.). There is no contradiction between this tradition and the fact that the verse is addressed to all the Muslims and obliges all of them to believe in the things mentioned therein; because the circle of such verses may be widened or shortened in

different contexts, according to various stages of application – as we have explained .with reference to various stages of the Islam and iman

al-Qummi narrates in his at-Tafsir from al-Baqir or as-Sadiq (a.s.), and as-Saduq narrates in Ma'ani 'l-akhbar from as-Sadiq (a.s.) that he said explaining the words of ".Allah, the dyeing of Allah...: "The dyeing is the Islam

.The author says: It is clear from the context of the verses

love and = (اَلوِلايَة as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "(Allah) dyed the believers with alwilayah = (اَلميثاقُ obedience of the Prophet and his Ahlu '١-bayt) in (i.e., at the time of) al-mithaq (the covenant taken from the souls)." (al-Kafi; Ma'ani 'l-akhbar

The author says: It refers to the esoteric meaning of this verse, as we shall explain later on; we shall then also explain the meaning of al-wilayah and al-mithaq, Allah .willing

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ١٤٢ – ١٥١

point

(١٤٢) سَيَقُولُ ٱلسُّفَهَآءُ مِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَا وَلَّىٰهُمۡ عَن قِبۡلَتِهِمُ ٱلَّتِي كَانُواْ عَلَيۡهَاۚ قُل لِّلَّهِ ٱلۡمَشۡرِقُ وَٱلۡمَغۡرِبُۚ يَهۡدِي مَن يَشَآءُ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطٖ مُّسۡتَقِيمٖ

(١٤٣) وَكَذَٰلِكَ جَعَلۡنَٰكُمۡ أُمَّةٗ وَسَطٗا لِّتَكُونُواْ شُهَدَآءَ عَلَى ٱلنَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ ٱلرَّسُولُ عَلَيۡكُمۡ شَهِيدٗاۗ وَمَا جَعَلۡنَا ٱلۡقِبۡلَةَ ٱلَّتِي كُنتَ عَلَيۡهَآ إِلَّا لِنَعۡلَمَ مَن يَتَّبِعُ ٱلرَّسُولَ مِمَّن يَنقَلِبُ عَلَىٰ عَقِبَيۡهِۚ وَإِن كَانَتۡ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ هَدَى ٱللَّهُۗ وَمَا كَانَ ٱللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَٰنَكُمۡۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِٱلنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٞ رَّحِيمٞ

(١٤٤) قَدۡ نَرَىٰ تَقَلُّبَ وَجۡهِكَ فِي ٱلسَّمَآءِۖ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبۡلَةٗ تَرۡضَىٰهَاۚ فَوَلِّ وَجۡهَكَ شَطۡرَ ٱلۡمَسۡجِدِ ٱلۡحَرَامِۚ وَحَيۡثُ مَا كُنتُمۡ فَوَلُّواْ وُجُوهَكُمۡ شَطۡرَهُۥۗ وَإِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ لَيَعۡلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ ٱلۡحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّهِمۡۗ وَمَا ٱللَّهُ بِغَٰفِلٍ عَمَّا يَعۡمَلُونَ

(١٤٥) وَلَئِنۡ أَتَيۡتَ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ بِكُلِّ ءَايَةٖ مَّا

تَبِعُواْ قِبلَتَكَ ۚ وَمَآ أَنتَ بِتَابِعٍ قِبلَتَهُمۚ ۚ وَمَا بَعضُهُم بِتَابِعٍ قِبلَةَ بَعضٍۚ ۚ وَلَئِنِ ٱتَّبَعتَ أَهوَآءَهُم مِّنۢ بَعدِ مَا جَآءَكَ مِنَ ٱلعِلمِ ۙ إِنَّكَ إِذًا لَّمِنَ ٱلظَّـٰلِمِينَ

(۱۴۶) ٱلَّذِينَ ءَاتَينَـٰهُمُ ٱلكِتَـٰبَ يَعرِفُونَهُ ۥ كَمَا يَعرِفُونَ أَبنَآءَهُمۖ ۖ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِّنهُمۡ لَيَكتُمُونَ ٱلحَقَّ وَهُمۡ يَعلَمُونَ

(۱۴۷) ٱلحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ ۖ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ ٱلمُمتَرِينَ

(۱۴۸) وَلِكُلٍّ وِجهَةٌ هُوَ مُوَلِّيهَا ۖ فَٱستَبِقُواْ ٱلخَيرَٰتِ ۚ أَينَ مَا تَكُونُواْ يَأتِ بِكُمُ ٱللَّهُ جَمِيعًا ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيءٍ قَدِيرٌ

(۱۴۹) وَمِنۡ حَيثُ خَرَجتَ فَوَلِّ وَجهَكَ شَطرَ ٱلمَسجِدِ ٱلحَرَامِ ۖ وَإِنَّهُ ۥ لَلحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ ۗ وَمَا ٱللَّهُ بِغَـٰفِلٍ عَمَّا تَعمَلُونَ

(۱۵۰) وَمِنۡ حَيثُ خَرَجتَ فَوَلِّ وَجهَكَ شَطرَ ٱلمَسجِدِ ٱلحَرَامِ ۚ وَحَيثُ مَا كُنتُمۡ فَوَلُّواْ وُجُوهَكُمۡ شَطرَهُ ۥ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيكُمۡ حُجَّةٌ إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُواْ مِنهُمۡ فَلَا تَخشَوهُمۡ وَٱخشَونِى وَلِأُتِمَّ نِعمَتِى عَلَيكُمۡ وَلَعَلَّكُمۡ تَهتَدُونَ

(۱۵۱) كَمَآ أَرۡسَلنَا فِيكُمۡ رَسُولًا مِّنكُمۡ يَتلُواْ عَلَيكُمۡ ءَايَـٰتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمۡ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ ٱلكِتَـٰبَ وَٱلحِكمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمۡ تَكُونُواْ تَعلَمُونَ

The fools among the people will say: “What has turned them from their qiblah which they had?” Say: “The East and the West belong only to Allah; He guides him whom He likes to a straight path” (۱۴۲).

And thus We have made you a medium nation so that you may be witnesses for the people and the Messenger may be a witness for you. And We had not made the qiblah which you had but that We might know him who follows the Messenger from him who turns back upon his heels; and though this was surely hard except for those whom Allah has guided aright; and Allah was not going to make your faith to be fruitless; most

.(surely Allah is Affectionate, Merciful to the people (۱۴۳

Indeed We see the turning of thy face to heaven, so We shall surely turn thee to a qiblah which thou shalt be pleased with; turn then thy face towards the Sacred Mosque; and wherever you are, turn your faces towards it; and those who have been given the Book most surely know that it is the truth from their Lord; and Allah is not at .(all heedless of what they do (۱۴۴

And even if you bring to those who have been given the Book every sign they would not follow your qiblah, nor can you be a follower of their qiblah, neither are they the followers of each other's qiblah; and if you follow their desires after the knowledge .(that has come to you, then you shall most surely be among the unjust (۱۴۵

Those whom We have given the Book recognize him as they recognize their sons; and .(a party of them most surely conceal the truth while they know (it) (۱۴۶

.(The truth is from your Lord, therefore you should not be of the doubters (۱۴۷

And every one has a direction to which he would turn; therefore, hasten to (do) good works; wherever you are, Allah will bring you all together; surely Allah has power over .(all things (۱۴۸

And from whatsoever place you come forth, turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque; and surely it is the very truth from your Lord, and Allah is not at all heedless of what

.(you do (۱۴۹

And from whatsoever place you come forth, turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque; and wherever you are turn your faces towards it, so that people shall have no argument against you, except such of them as are unjust; so do not fear them, and fear Me; and so that I may complete My favour on you and that you may walk on the .(right course (۱۵۰

Even as We have sent among you a Messenger from among you who recites to you Our communications and purifies you and teaches you the Book and the wisdom and .(teaches you that which you did not know (۱۵۱

Commentary

point

Ponder on these verses and you will find them well-connected with each other, a common context joining them together like a strand running through the beads. These verses together talk about the appointment of the Ka'bah as the qiblah (the .direction of prayer etc.) for the Muslims

Therefore, no attention should be paid to those who say that there was a change of sequence in the arrangement of these verses, or that some of them have abrogated the others. Although they narrate some traditions to this effect, but they do not deserve any comment because all of them go against the clear meaning of these .verses

Qur'an: The fools among the people will say: "What has turned them from their qiblah which they had?": It is the second introductory sentence for the soon-to-be-.promulgated order to make the Ka'bah as the qiblah of the Muslims

Also, it teaches

the reply of the objection which the "fools among the people", that is, the Jews and the pagans of Mecca, were expected to raise: The Jews because of their partisanship of their own qiblah, Baytu '١-Maqdis; and the pagan Arabs because they were always .on the look out for any new thing which they could object to

Allah prepared the minds for change of qiblah, first by revealing the story of Ibrahim (a.s.) and various honours be-stowed on him by Allah, as well as the honour accorded to his son, Isma'il; their prayers for the Ka'bah and Mecca, as well as for the Prophet and the Muslim group; their construction of the House and the order they received to .cleanse it for the worship of Allah

It is recognized that the change of qiblah from Baytu '١-Maqdis to the Ka'bah was an event of greatest religious significance, one of the most important commandments given to the Muslims after the hijrah of the Prophet to Medina, when the roots of .Islam were firmly taking place and its knowledge and realities were being spread

Understandably, the Jews were not going to remain silent in face of this legislation: According to their thinking this change negated one of their greatest religious prides, that is, qiblah; hitherto the Muslims were following them in their qiblah, and the Jews .could claim a precedence over the Muslims in this religious symbol

Moreover, this new legislation was a manifest advancement in the Muslims' religion - it made all of them to

face a single point in their worship and other religious rites. It saved them from looking towards divergent directions - physically; and from difference of opinions - .spiritually

Facing towards the Ka'bah had rather more influence and deeper impression on the souls of the Muslims than the rules of cleanliness and invocation etc.; and their .enemies, and particularly the Jews, understood it, and they resented it

Their stories, as narrated in the Qur'an, prove that they were a nation which did not give any credence to anything in this world which was beyond the reach of the five senses. As spiritual things were not of any importance in their eyes, they used to accept the spiritual rules without any protest - they did not consider it worth arguing .about

But whenever they were given a Divine Commandment which had any connection with the physical world, which had a material form - like war, emigration, sajdah, .polite speech etc. - they stood up against it, and opposed it very vehemently

In short, Allah informed His Messenger what the enemies of Islam were going to say against the change of qiblah, and taught him how they should be replied, how their .arguments should be refuted

Their objection: The first qiblah was prescribed by Allah for the previous prophets. Why was it changed to another House which had no such distinction? Was this change affected by the order of Allah? How could Allah contravene His Own previously ordained rule, or abrogate His Own law? (We have mentioned under

(.the verse of “Abrogation” that the Jews do not believe in abrogation

Or, was it done without any order from Allah? If so, then the Muslims have deviated from the right path and have left guidance for misguidance. (This objection has not (.been mentioned in so many words in the Qur'an, but the suggested reply points to it

Reply: When Allah prescribes a house like the Ka'bah as qiblah, it is not based on any specialty of that house or stone; there is no unalterable and inseparable quality in that .building which could demand that honour as a right

Being chosen as a qiblah is not an inviolable and natural characteristic of any building. Every article, every building and every direction is equally capable of being selected for this purpose; and none has any especial claim for it. Everything belongs to Allah, He issues orders about it, whatever He likes, in any way He likes, and whenever He .likes

Whatever He decrees, it is for the guidance of the people, for their individual and collective good and perfection. He does not order but for guidance, and He does not .guide except to the way which leads directly to their perfection and well-being

Qur’an: The fools among the people will say: It means the Jews and the polytheists of Arabia; and that is why they have been referred to as “the people”. They have been called “fools” because their mentality was not right, and their ideas about the Divine Law were unsound. And that is what

.foolishness is: crookedness of mind and unsoundness of opinion

is joined to its (اَلت َّوْلِيَهُ) "Qur'an: What has turned them…. When the verb, "at-tawliyah object (without preposition), it means, to turn your face towards that thing, to keep it facing you; as Allah says: "so We shall surely turn thee to a qiblah which thou shalt ."like

it gives the opposite meaning, that is, ,(عَنْ) When it is followed by the preposition 'an :to turn away from, to turn one's face from. The verse means

What has turned them away, or turned their faces, from the qiblah which they were using hitherto, that is, Baytu 'l-Maqdis towards which the Prophet and the Muslims used to pray during his stay at Mecca and for a few months after his emigration to .Medina

Qur'an: from their qiblah: The qiblah is attributed to the Muslims, although the Jews were using it centuries before the Prophet. Obviously, their turning from their own .qiblah looks more surprising, and gives more room for objection

And it was for the same reason that the opening phrase says: "What has turned them", instead of saying, "What has turned the Prophet and the Muslims." It would not have looked objectionable in the least if they had said: "What has turned the Prophet "?and the Muslims from the qiblah of the Jews

Qur'an: Say: "The East and the West belong only to Allah": Only these two directions were mentioned, because it is through them that all other cardinal and compound ,directions are fixed

,like the North

.the South and all the intermediate directions between any two cardinal ones

The East and the West are relative directions which are fixed by the rising and setting of the sun and the stars; they cover all places of the earth (except two imaginary points of the true North and South Poles). Perhaps, it was for this reason that only .these two were chosen to represent all the directions

path) = (صِرَاطٌ "Qur'an: He guides him whom He likes to a straight path: The word "sirat since it is a common noun, and ,(اَلـْ) "is mentioned here without a definite article "al does not specify a defmite path, because nations differ in their paths due to their .differences in ability to attain perfection and happiness

Qur'an: And thus We have made you a medium nation that you may be witnesses for the people and the Messenger may be a witness for you: Apparently it means as follows: As We are going to change very soon the qiblah for you in order that We may .guide you to a right path, in the same way We have made you an intermediary nation

Relationship between Prescription of Qiblah and Ummah being Witnesses for the people and the Messenger being Witness for the Ummah

Someone has explained it in the following way: And like this wonderful making, We have made you a medium nation. Such an explanation deserves no comment. Another :explanation given by another exegete is as follows

They were made a "medium nation" to "be witnesses for the people". What does it mean? "Medium" is a thing in the. centre, neither to

this side nor to that. This “ummah” has the same position vis-à-vis the people - that is, .the People of the Book and the polytheists

The polythesists and the dualist emphasize the physical aspects of life. Their whole attention is fixed to this worldly life; their plans are centred on its trinkets and comforts. They do not believe in the Resurrection or the hereafter; spiritual perfection and esoteric virtues are not so important to them. On the other extreme are some groups, like the Christians, who put utmost emphasis on the spiritual aspects to the .detriment of the physical ones

They teach monasticism and rejection of the world. They seem heedless to the fact that the Creator has made the physical perfection a means by which man may reach the goal for which he has been created. In short the latter - the “people of spirit” - nullified their goal by nullifying the means; and the former - the “people of body” - nullified their goal by focusing their whole attention to the means as though it was the goal in itself. Allah has made this ummah a “medium”, by giving them a religion which leads them to the straight and upright path, in the middle - inclined neither to this side .nor to that

It strengthens both sides - the body as well as the soul - according to what each of them needs and deserves; it is a religion which encourages and invites man to .combine the virtue of both

Man is, after all, a combination of body and soul; he is neither body alone nor spirit alone. If his life is to be a happy one, he must unite physical perfections with the .spiritual one

This ummah then is the medium and well-balanced one; it is a criterion to judge and weigh both sides of extremes. It is, therefore, the witness for all the people who have deviated from the middle way going to this side or that. And the Prophet - the most .perfect and the ideal example of this ummah - is the witness for this ummah

The Prophet is the criterion to judge the condition of this ummah's individuals; and the ummah, in its turn, is the criterion to judge the condition of other people; it is the point .to which the two extremes are expected to return

Comment: What this exegete has said is true in itself, but it does not explain the wordings of this verse. The ummah, by virtue of its position in the middle, may be called a criterion to judge the extremes, as well as a point to which the people of the two extremes should return. But it does not make it a "witness" for the two extremes, .nor it gives the ummah ability to observe the said extremes

Apparently, there is no correlation between being a medium (in the above-mentioned sense) and being a witness. Also, there is no reason why the Messenger of Allah should be made a witness for them; there

.is no correlation between the two witnessings

But the verse clearly says that the Messenger of Allah shall be a witness for the ummah, because the ummah shall be a witness for the people, and it shall acquire .that status because it is a medium ummah

Moreover, the witnessing, referred to in this verse, is one of the Qur'anic realities, which has been mentioned repeatedly in the Divine Speech; and looking at various contexts where it has been referred to, we find that its connotation differs completely :from the above-quoted meaning. Allah says

How will it be, then, when We bring from every people a witness and bring you as a ;(witness for these? (۴:۴۱

And on the day when We will raise up a witness out of every nation, then shall no permission be given to those who disbelieve, nor shall they be made to solicit favour ;((۱۶:۸۴

and the Book shall be laid down and the prophets and the witnesses shall be … .(brought up… (۳۹:۶۹

Note that witnessing in these verses is unconditional, and the obvious meaning is that they shall be witnesses for the deeds of their nations, and will also testify that the messengers of Allah did convey the Divine Message to those nations, as is made clear :in the verse

Most certainly then We will question those to whom (the messengers) were sent, and .(most certainly We will question the messengers (۷:۶

No doubt they will give the evidence in the hereafter; but they must have seen the ,events in this life

:as may be inferred by the words of 'Isa (a.s.) quoted in the Qur'an

and I was a witness of them so long as I was among them, but when Thou didst ... take me (away) completely, Thou were the watcher over them, and Thou art witness ;(of all things (۵:۱۱۷

.(and on the Day of Resurrection he (i.e., 'Isa) shall be a witness against them (۴:۱۵۹ ...

Obviously, our normal senses, with all their powers, cannot perceive except the exterior forms of deeds and actions, and that also of a thing which is present, which is .within the reach. They cannot perceive a non-existent or a non-present item

And it is completely beyond their power to know, comprehend or identify the realities of those actions and deeds; nor can they observe the immaterial ideas like belief or .disbelief, and success or failure

In short, no man can witness a thing which is hidden from the five senses, nor can he observe the esoteric ideas and characteristics that are locked into another person's heart. But it is these hidden realities which will be taken account of, and looked into, :on the Day of Resurrection, as Allah says

.(but He will call you to account for what your hearts have earned (۲:۲۲۵ ...

Obviously, these things cannot be seen even by those who are present, let alone those who are absent. It can be done only by a man whose affairs are managed .directly by Allah, and whom Allah makes to “see” the hidden realities

This fact may be

:inferred from the words of Allah

And those whom they call upon besides Him have no authority for intercession, but he .(who bears witness of the truth (i.e., of the reality) and they know (۴۳:۸۶

Surely, 'Isa (a.s.) is included in this exception, because, Allah has testified that he is one of those who shall bear witness (as is seen from the above-mentioned two verses). Thus, he is one of those who had "seen" the realities and known the hidden .factors of the deeds of their ummah

In short, the witnessing mentioned in the verse under discussion does not mean that this ummah follows a religion which combines physical perfection with spiritual sublimity. Certainly, this explanation has nothing to do with the meaning of "witness" .nor does it fit the apparent meaning of the above-quoted verses

Actually, they have been called "witnesses" of the people, because they see and observe in this world the realities of the people's actions - felicity and infelicity, .rejection and acceptance, submission and arrogance

And they shall give evidence for or against those people on the Day of Judgment, the day when Allah will make every thing to testify for or against a man, not excepting his :own limbs and organs; the day when the Messenger will say

.(O my Lord! surely my people treated this Qur'an as a forsaken thing (۲۵:۳۰"

Also, it is known that the whole ummah could not attain to this position; it is a special status given to only the pure friends of Allah. Even those who

are only slightly below them in the ranks of felicity, and other just and pious believers are not included in this verse – let alone the rubble of the nation, or the Nimrods and .Pharaohs of the ummah

You will see in the Commentary of the verse ۴:۶۹ (And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger, these are with those upon whom Allah has bestowed favours from among the prophets and the truthful and the martyrs and the good ones; and excellent are these as companions,), that the least that can be said about the martyrs – the witnesses of the deeds – is that they are under the guardian-ship of Allah, enjoying His favours, and proceeding on the straight path. Also, it has been described :in short in the explanation of the verse

.(The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours... (۱:۷

When Allah told this ummah that it was made witness for the people, the meaning was that the "witnesses" would be from among this ummah. In this respect, it is not different from those verses which tell the Children of Israel that they were made to .excel over the worlds

Such verses show that there were among the Children of Israel such personalities who were given that distinction; not that every individual of them was superior to the worlds. A distinction enjoyed by a group is attributed to the whole nation, because the .group is a part of the nation

Likewise, this ummah has been said to be "witnesses over the

people", because there are, in this ummah, people who shall be witnesses of the .people, and the Messenger shall be witness of them

:Objection: Allah says in the Qur'an

And (as for) those who believe in Allah and His messengers, these it is that are the .(truthful and the witnesses near their Lord (۵۷:۱۹

."It shows that all the believers, in general, are "the witnesses

Reply: The phrase "near their Lord" proves that Allah will include them among the witnesses on the Day of Resurrection, a rank which they had not got in this life. It is :like the verse which says

And (as for) those who believe and their offspring follow them in faith, We will unite .(with them their offspring... (۵۲:۲۱

Apart from that, this verse is general and shows that all the believers from all the nations will be witnesses near Allah; it does not speak about this ummah especially; .therefore, it is of no use to the objector

Objection: If the ummah has been made a "medium" in this meaning, it does not necessarily follow that the ummah, or a certain group among the ummah, should be witnesses of the people's deeds, nor that the Messenger of Allah should be witness of those witnesses. Therefore, the problem which had arisen in the previous .explanation, remains unanswered even by your exegesis

Reply: The verse says that those people were made witnesses because they were made a medium nation. It means that this "mediumship" is something which brings the "evidence" and "witnesses" in its wake. And

:Allah says

O you who believe! bow down and prostrate yourselves and worship your Lord, and do good that you may succeed. And strive hard in (the way of) Allah, (such) a striving as is due to Him; He has chosen you and has not laid upon you any hardship in religion; the faith of your father, Ibrahim; he named you Muslims before and in this, so that the Messenger may be a witness for you, and you may be witnesses for the people; therefore, establish prayer and pay zakat and hold fast to Allah; He is your Guardian; how excellent the Guardian and how excellent the Helper! (۲۲:۷۷ -۷۸).

Note that the distinction that the Messenger should be a witness for them and they should be witnesses for the people, is based on two things: First, that they were chosen by Allah; and, second, that Allah had not laid upon them any hardship in religion. Then the religion is defined as the faith of your father, Ibrahim, who had named you Muslims before.

He had used this name for you when he prayed to Allah on your behalf, in these words: and (raise) from our offspring a group submitting (Muslims) to Thee. Allah granted his prayer and made you Muslims, you have surrendered to His order and command; you neither disobey Him nor behave arrogantly before Him; that is why you feel no hardship in the religion, no rule looks difficult for you to follow. You have, therefore, been chosen by Him,

.and guided on the straight path, submitting to your Lord in all affairs

We have made you like this, in order that the Messenger may be a witness for you and you may be witnesses of the people. Accordingly, you shall be a medium between the Messenger and the people; you shall be connected to the Messenger on one side and to the people on the other. In this way, the wish of Ibrahim has been fulfilled :about you and the Messenger, as he had prayed

Our Lord! and raise up in them an Apostle from among themselves who shall recite to them Thy communications and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them .((۲:۱۲۹

You are that Muslim ummah; the Messenger has transmitted the knowledge of the Book and wisdom to your hearts; and you have been purified by him. Purification has cleansed your hearts from impurities and freed it for My worship and obedience (and .(as mentioned earlier, it is what Islam means

Therefore, you are the Muslims, sincere in your worship. Of course, the Messenger has precedence over you, because it is he who has guided and trained you. He has precedence over the whole ummah, and you are the medium group - joined to the .Messenger on one side, and to the people on the other

There are many associations at the beginning and the end of the verse which point to this meaning; one may understand them on meditation; and we shall further explain it in a proper

.place, Allah willing

:However, the foregoing explanation shows that

First: The fact that they have been made a medium ummah has a direct bearing on the two objectives. In other words, the facts that “you may be witnesses for the people”, and that “the Messenger may be a witness for you”, both are the direct result .”of their being “a medium nation

Second: They have been called a medium ummah because they are placed between the Messenger and the people – not because they are a medium between two .”extremes, or between the “people of spirit” and the “people of body

Third: The verse in its connotation has connection with the verses of the prayer of .Ibrahim (a.s.); and this witnessing is a privilege of the said Muslim ummah

One thing more: It appears from the Qur'an that witnessing about the deeds is not exclusively reserved for the human witnesses. Everything which has any connection with a deed – angels, time and place, religion and Book, limbs and organs, senses and .hearts, for example – will testify about it

It may be inferred from the above that the same place and limbs etc. which we have in this life will be present on the Day of Judgment. Also, it appears that all the above-mentioned things have a sort of a life and perception with which they can perceive the .particulars of deeds – those particulars are imprinted on them

It is not necessary that every life should be like our own; there is no reason why life

should be of only one type. It cannot be said that because time or space does not .have a life like ours, therefore, it has no life

This topic has been mentioned here just to complete the picture. Details about each .point will be given in more suitable places

Qur’an: And We had not made the qiblah which you had but that We might know him who follows the Messenger from him who turns back upon his heels: The words: “We :might know”, may be explained in two ways

First: It may mean, 'My Messenger might know'. Great people generally use this style to speak on behalf of themselves and their subordinates. For example, a ruler says: 'We killed him', or, 'We imprisoned him', although it is his employees, not him-self who .kill or imprison

Second: It may refer to that knowledge of Allah which ac-companies the creation or existence of a thing, and not to that knowledge which Allah has of everything before that thing comes into being. “Turning back upon one's heels” is an allegorical .expression, which denotes evasion or dissension

When a man, who is standing, turns from one direction to another, he turns on his :heels. It is like the words of Allah

.(And whoever shall turn his back to them on that day... (۸:۱۶

Obviously, this verse aims to remove any possible misgivings which the believers would have had because of the change of qiblah: Why qiblah was changed? Why the previous qiblah was abrogated? What will happen to the prayers which

?they had prayed facing Baytu 'l-Maqdis

Also, it is clear that “the qiblah which you had” refers to Baytu'l-Maqdis, and not to the Ka'bah (as someone has said). If his explanation is accepted, it would imply that both Baytu '١-Maqdis and Ka'bah were prescribed as qiblah twice, not once. But there is .nothing to support this suggestion

However, it was but natural that the believers should feel some uneasiness because .of this change

First of all, as Allah had already decided that He would ultimately make the Ka'bah as the qiblah of the Muslims, then why did He make Baytu'l-Maqdis as their qiblah for so ?many years in the beginning

The verse says that all these rules and legislations are made for the benefit of the people themselves. The laws of religion aim at training the people and perfecting them; separating the believers from others; distinguishing the obedient from the dis-obedient, the submissive from the arrogants. And it was for the same reason that the .previous qiblah was prescribed for you

It was done in order that “We might know him who follows the Messenger”, that is, We might distinguish him who follows the Messenger “from him who turns back upon his heels”. In usual way, the sentence should have said, “who follows thee”, but the Qur'an has used the noun “the Messenger” instead of pronoun, it is to remind us that his status of Messengership has a direct bearing on this separation between obedient .and disobedient ones

We had not made the qiblah which you“

had": That is, We had not made Baytu 'l-Maqdis as qiblah for you but for the reasons .described

Their second worry could be about the prayers which they had prayed facing Baytu 'l-Maqdis. What would be its legal status, as it was prayed towards a building that was ?no longer valid

Allah says that Baytu 'l-Maqdis was a valid qiblah as long as it was not abrogated. When Allah abrogates a rule, it looses its validity from the time of its abrogation, not from the original legislation; and it is a result of Allah's affection and mercy to the .believers

The above misgiving and its reply is inferred from the words: "and Allah was not going to make your faith to be fruitless; most surely Allah is Affectionate, Merciful to the both basically denote mercy (اَلرَّحْمَة) "and "ar-rnhmah (اَلرَّأفَة) "people." "ar-Ra'fah and compassion; but the former usually has the connotation of pity for an afflicted .one, while the latter is general

Qur'an: Indeed We see the turning of thy face to heaven, so We shall surely turn thee to a qiblah which thou shalt be pleased with: The verse shows that the Messenger of Allah, before the revelation of the verse of qiblah - that is, this very verse - used to turn his face to heaven, as he waited - or hoped - that Allah would send some .commandment regarding qiblah

He did so because he wished that Allah would honour him with a qiblah especially prescribed for him. It does

not mean that he was not pleased with Baytu'l-Maqdis as his qiblah - for be it from the Messenger to do so! Allah says: "We shall surely turn thee to a qiblah which thou shalt be pleased with." To be pleased with a thing does not necessarily mean to be displeased with its alternative.

The traditions, describing the occasion of revelation of this verse, say that the Jews reviled the Muslims and boasted against them, all because the Muslims prayed towards Baytu 'l-Maqdis - the Jews' qiblah. It made the Messenger of Allah sad; so he came out in the dark of the night looking towards heaven waiting for a revelation from Allah, hoping that it would cheer him up. Then this verse was revealed.

Now, suppose he would have received revelation to continue praying towards the previous qiblah, that is, Baytu 'l-Maqdis, it would have been his proof against the Jews that, he followed the qiblah by the order of Allah and not in imitation of the Jews.

The fact is that there never was, nor there ever is, anything to be ashamed of, if the Prophet and the Muslims prayed facing Baytu 'l-Maqdis, because the servant has no choice but to accept and obey the order of the Master. But the verse promulgated a new qiblah.

It removed the cause of the Jews' revile and boast, in addition to defining the new qiblah. In this way, it was doubly welcomed - it was a proof against the Jews as well as a

.(source of pleasure for the Messenger of Allah (S

Qur’an: turn then thy face towards the Sacred Mosque; and wherever you are, turn your face towards it. “ash-Shatr (اَلشَّطْرُ)” translated here as “towards”, literally means “part of”. “Part of the Sacred Mosque” refers to the Ka'bah.

Allah used this expression, instead of saying, towards the Ka'bah, or, towards the Sacred House, to keep the new rule parallel to the previous one. They used to pray to a part of the Remote Mosque, that is, its well-known Rock; so it was changed to a part of the Sacred Mosque, that is, the Ka'bah.

It is quite apart from the fact that the addition of the word, “part of” to “the Mosque” and its qualification with the adjective “Sacred” gives many details of this legislation which would have been lost if this phrase were changed to “the Ka'bah” or “the Sacred House.”

Allah begins this verse by giving the order personally to His Messenger (turn then thy face towards the Sacred Mosque), and ends it by including all the Muslims in it (and wherever you are, turn your face towards it).

It supports the traditions that the qiblah was changed when the Messenger of Allah (S) was praying and the Muslims were praying behind him. There-fore, he was personally told to turn towards the Ka'bah during that prayer; then the verse went on describing a general order which covered him and all the Muslims, for every time and in every place.

Qur’an: and those who have been given

the Book most surely know that it is the truth from their Lord: Their Book contains the prophecies showing the truth of the prophethood of Muhammad (S), or that this True .Prophet would pray facing to-wards the Sacred Mosque

In any case, the verse shows that the Jews' Book had some verses which confirmed - explicitly or implicitly - the truth of this legislation; and Allah is not at all heedless of what they do; He knows how they hide the truth and conceal the knowledge which .they had been given

Qur'an: And even if you bring to those who have been given the Book every sign they would not follow your qiblah: The verse rebukes them for their obstinacy and .stubbornness. Their refusal is not because truth is hidden from them

No, they know very well that it is the truth - they have no doubt about it. Yet they create mischief and invent objection after objection, because they hate the religion and reject the truth. No proof would satisfy them; no sign would make them change .their attitude

Even if you bring to them every sign they would not follow your qiblah, because they are obstinate and refuse to accept the truth; nor can you be a follower of their qiblah, .because you have a clear proof from your Lord

This Qur'anic sentence may also be interpreted as a prohibition given in the form of a proposition. Neither are they the followers of each other's qiblah. The Jews face towards Baytu 'l-Maqdis wherever

.they may be; and the Christians face towards the East wherever they may be

Neither the former would follow the qiblah, of the latter, nor the latter would accept .the qiblah of the former – because all of them follow their own desires

Qur'an: and if you follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, then you shall most surely be among the unjust: The admonition (in singular pronoun) is addressed to the Prophet, but it is really meant for his ummah. It also indicates that .the Jews, in their recalcitrance, follow their desire and have become unjust

Qur'an: Those whom We have given the Book recognize him as they recognize their sons: The pronoun "him" refers to the Messenger of Allah, not to "the Book"; the .simile, "as they recognize their sons", fits recognition of a man, not of a book

Nobody says: He recognizes this book as he recognizes his son. Moreover, the subject of the speech is the Messenger of Allah and the revelation he received regarding the .qiblah, it has nothing to do with the Book which was given to the People of the Book

The verse says: The People of the Book recognize the Messenger of Allah by the prophecies which their Book contains, as they recognize their sons, and a party of .(them most surely conceal the truth while they know (it

The previous verses were addressed to the Prophet (in second person singular pronouns); then in this verse he has been mentioned in third person, and

the talk is addressed to the believers; then the next verse again reverts to the previous style and is addressed to the Prophet. The style was changed here to show .that the truth of the Prophet was clear and well-known to the People of the Book

This change reminds one of a speaker who is talking before a group, one of whom surpasses all in virtues and excellence. The speaker, therefore, addresses him especially (in recognition of his excellence), although the talk is meant for the whole .group

Then for some reason, he wants to describe the virtues and excellence of that person; now he turns towards the audience and treats him as absent, mentioning him by pronouns of third person. When that topic is finished, he again assumes the .previous style of addressing him directly

Qur’an: The truth is from your Lord, therefore you should not be of the doubters: It emphasizes the preceding statement and strongly interdicts doubting. The talk in .singular pronouns is addressed to the Prophet but is actually intended for the ummah

Qur’an: And every one has a direction to which he would turn; therefore, hasten to (do) good work: 'al-Wijhah" (اَلوِجْه_َةُ) on paradigm of, as well as synonymous to, al-qiblah (اَلقِبْل_َةُ), has the same meaning 'that to which one faces'.

The verse sums up the foregoing statements and draws their attention to another more important reality. Every nation has its own qiblah, pre-scribed for them .according to their own needs and atmosphere

Being qiblah is not an inherent and inseparable

characteristic of any place or direction; it is not a natural or personal feature of a thing which could not be changed. It is therefore not good for you to waste your time and .energy in disputation and argumentation about it

You should rather hasten to do good work and try to excel others in virtuous deeds; Allah is surely going to gather you on a day about which there is no doubt; and wherever you are, Allah will bring you all together; surely Allah has power over all .things

This verse is applicable to the subject of qiblah, as it comes between the verses dealing with that subject. Also, it may be applied to the creative affairs as it points to the Divine Measure and Decree and to the related legislation. We shall explain this .topic, Allah willing, in another place

Qur’an: And from whatsoever place you come forth, turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque: According to some exegetes it means: And from any place you come forth and at any place you come down, turn your face to the Sacred Mosque. Others .say that it means: And from whatever town you come out

The phrase, “from whatsoever place you come forth”, literally means as follows: 'from whatsoever place thou halt come forth'. Possibly it may refer to Mecca from which the :Messenger of Allah (S) had to come out, as Allah says

.(the town of thine which has driven thee out… (۴۷:۱۳ …

However, the, verse says that the law to face

the Ka'bah is a firm order which you have to observe in Mecca as well as in other towns and places. Then Allah emphasizes it in these words: and surely it is the very .truth from your Lord, and Allah is not at all heedless of what you do

Qur'an: And from whatsoever place you come forth, turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque; and wherever you are turn your faces towards it: The first sentence is repeated here word by word, to show that this law is to be followed in every .condition

For example, one says: Fear Allah when you stand up; fear Allah when you sit down; .fear Allah when you speak; fear Allah when you are silent

The speaker wants to emphasize that you should fear Allah in all conditions and in every situation. This point would be lost if the above sentence were reconstructed in the following way: Fear Allah when you stand up, when you sit down, when you speak, .and when you are silent

The meaning is as follows: Face towards the Sacred Mosque of Mecca whence you had to come out, and wherever you happen to be in the world, turn your faces .towards it

Qur'an: so that people shall have no argument against you, except such of them as are unjust; so do not fear them, and fear Me; and so that I may complete My favour on you and that you may walk on the right course: These sentences describe the following three benefits of

this commandment, and at the same time put the utmost emphasis on obeying this :law

First: The Jews knew from their books that the promised Prophet would face towards the Ka'bah, turning away from Baytu 'l-Maqdis, as Allah has pointed to this fact in a ,foregoing verse

and those who have been given the Book most surely know that it is the truth from .(their Lord (۲:۱۴۴

If the qiblah were not changed, the Jews could have used it as a proof against the Muslims that the Prophet was not the one whose advent was foretold in _ the previous books. But now the promulgation of this order has not left them any room for .disputation - except those of them who are unjust

This exception gives the following meaning: Of course, those of them who are unjust - because they follow their desire - will never be satisfied; they will continue arguing against it; "so do not fear them", because they are unjust and they follow their desires ."- and Allah does not guide aright the unjust people - "and fear Me

Second: Obedience of this rule will lead the Muslims to the completion of Divine favour on them, by perfecting their religion. We shall explain the meaning of the "completion :of favour", when we write the verse

This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and .(chosen for you Islam as a religion (۵:۴

Third: There is the hope that through this rule the Muslims will be guided

to the straight path. We have explained the meaning of guidance under the verse: .(Guide us to the straight path (۱:۵

:An exegete has written

The verse of qiblah contains the words, 'and so that I may complete My favour on" you and that you may walk on the right course'. Similar words have been used in the :'Chapter of Victory', while mentioning the victory of Mecca

Surely We have given to you a clear victory, so that Allah may forgive you your (i.e., your ummah their) past faults and those to follow and complete His favour to you and .(keep you on a straight path (۴۸:۱-۲

This almost identical expression shows that the verse of qiblah too alludes to the ".victory of Mecca

According to that exegete, "the Ka'bah in the beginning of Islam was occupied by the idols, which were put there by the polytheists - the power in those days was in the .hands of the pagans. Islam was weak, it had no authority or power

There-fore, Allah told the Prophet to face towards Baytu 'l-Maqdis, the qiblah of the Jews, who were nearer than the polytheists, to Islam. Then the Prophet emigrated to .Medina, and Islam began to gain strength

The time was coming nearer when Mecca would be conquered and the House of Allah cleansed of the idols' pollution. Allah therefore ordered the Prophet to change the direction of qiblah. It was a great bounty favour which Allah has reserved for the .Muslims

And Allah gave a promise, included in this verse of

qiblah, that He would complete His favour on them and guide them to the right course. It was implied in these words that the Ka'bah would soon be cleansed of the idols and images; the Muslims would be exclusively connected to the Ka'bah as it would remain .exclusively under their care

This verse actually gave the good tidings of the conquest of Mecca. Thereafter, when Mecca was conquered, Allah reminded them of that promise by using almost similar :words in its description

".and complete His favours to you and keep you on a straight path ..."

Comment: This explanation, although apparently well-founded, is in fact not based on deep reflection; because the words of the Qur'an do not support it. How do we know that the verse of qiblah contains a promise to complete the favour? The answer is: a preposition used here for the final cause; so that, in order that) in li- _لِ) Because of li .(...so that I may complete = (لأُتِمَّ utimma

And the verse in Chapter ۴۸ (Victory), which, according to him, was revealed in :fulfilment of that promise, also begins with the same proposition

so that Allah may forgive you your (i.e., your ummah their) past faults and those to .(follow and complete His favour to you and keep you on a straight path (۴۸:۲

Clearly, both verses contain the same promise to complete the favour in future; neither gives the good news of its fulfilment yet. Moreover, the verse of qiblah gives this promise to all the Muslims while

that of the Victory uses singular pronouns and is addressed to the Prophet personally. .Clearly they have been revealed in different contexts

If there is any verse showing the fulfilment of the promise given in both these verses, :then it can only be the verse

This day I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and .(chosen for you Islam as a religion (۵:۳

favour, bounty, blessing) in the = (اَلنِّعْمَـ ةُ We shall explain the meaning of an-ni'mah explanation of this verse, and there we shall describe what was the favour and bounty that was completed on that day, and by which Allah has put the Muslims under .His obligation for ever

There are two other verses which, like the above-mentioned two, contain the promise ;of completion of favour

but He wishes to purify you and that He may complete His favour on you so that you ;(may be grateful (۵:۶

.(even thus does He complete His favour upon you, that haply you may submit (۱۶:۸۱

.We shall write under these verses somethings related to this topic

Qur’an: Even as We have sent among you a Messenger from among you who recites to you Our communications and purifies you and teaches you the Book and the wisdom and teaches you that which you did not know: The verse begins with the word like, as) and = (كَـ like, as, even as), which is obviously a compound of ka =(كَـمَا kama .which changes the verb into masdar (مَا) ma

,The connotation, therefore

is as follows: 'We have be-stowed Our favours on you by appointing the Ka'bah as your qiblah. It is the House that Ibrahim built, and he prayed to Us for its good and .blessings

We have done this in the same way as We have favoured you by sending to you a Messenger from among you who recites to you Our communications and teaches you the Book and the wisdom and purifies you. We did so in answer to the pleading of :Ibrahim, when he and his son, Isma'il, prayed to Us

Our Lord! and raise up in them a Messenger from among themselves, who shall recite '.to them Thy communications and teach them the Book and wisdom and purify them

This verse, in short, says that it was Allah's favour on this ummah that he sent the .Prophet among them, as it was a favour to appoint the Ka'bah as their qiblah

Who are the people referred to by the second person pro-nouns in "among you a Messenger from among you"? The application may be restricted or extended, depending on the level of explanation whether it is interpreted esoterically, literally or .legislatively

Esoterically, it is addressed especially to the earlier mentioned: Submissive group (۲:۱۲۸), that is, those who were given authority over religion and followers of religion; literally all the Muslims from the progeny of Isma'il (i.e., the Arabs of Mudar tribe) are .included; legislatively, it covers all the Muslims, Arabs and non-Arabs alike

,verses = (اَلآيَاتُ "Qur'an: recites to you Our communications: "al-Ayat

signs – translated here as communications) obviously refers to the verses of the "Qur'an, because it is the words (not the meanings) that are recited; 'at-tazkiyah .to purify) is to remove dirt, filth and blemish = (اَلت ـَّزْكِيَةُ)

The Prophet cleansed them thoroughly – from wrong beliefs like polytheism and rejection of true faith, from vile and base character like pride and avarice, and from .evil and immoral actions and things like murder, fornication and intoxicants

Qur'an: and teaches you the Book and the wisdom and teaches you that which you did .not know: It encompasses all primary and secondary aspects of religious knowledge

These verses have variously changed the pronouns used for Allah, using third and first persons, singular and plural; and for others, using first, second and third persons. .The reason of every such change may be understood by a little meditation

Traditions

Al-Qummi narrates in his at-Tafsir that as-Sadiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allah, The fools among the people will say...: "The qiblah was changed to the Ka'bah after the Prophet prayed towards Baytu 'l-Maqdis for thirteen years in Mecca; and (also) after his emigration to Medina he prayed towards Baytu 'l-Maqdis for seven months." .(He said:) "Then Allah turned him towards Mecca

And it was because the Jews used to revile the Messenger of Allah (S), saying that he was their follower (as) he prayed to their qiblah. The Messenger of Allah (S) became very sad because of it; and he came out in the middle of the night looking to

.the horizons of the heaven, waiting for an order in this regard from Allah

When it was day and the time of the noon prayer arrived, (the Prophet, S) was in the mosque of Banu Salim. And he had (already) prayed two rak'ahs of zuhr, when Jibril came down; and he held the Prophet's upper arms and turned him towards the .Ka'bah

And he brought down to him (the revelation): Indeed We see the turning of thy face to heaven, so We shall surely turn thee to a qiblah which thou shalt like; turn then thy .face towards the Sacred Mosque

Thus, the Prophet had prayed two rak'ahs towards Baytu 'l-Maqdis, and (prayed the remaining) two rak'ahs towards the Ka'bah. Then the Jews and the fools said: 'What (has turned them from their qiblah which they had?' " (Majma'u 'l-bayan

The author says: There are numerous traditions of similar meaning narrated by the Sunni and Shi'ah narrators, which are recorded in the books of traditions. The reports .differ about the time when the qiblah was changed

Most of them say that it happened in the month of Rajab in the second year of hijrah - the seventeenth month after the emigration; and this timing looks more correct. Allah .willing, we shall describe some other related topics in a separate discourse

There are traditions from Sunni narrators, which explain the witnessing of this ummah concerning the people and the witnessing of the Prophet for them, in these terms: "The nations will deny, on the Day of

.Judgment, that the prophets had conveyed any message to them

Then Allah will ask the prophets to bring their proof that they had really conveyed the message - and Allah knows it better. So, the ummah of Muhammad (s. a. w. a.) will be .(brought in and they will testify (for the prophets

'?Then the (other) nations will say: 'How do you know

They will say: 'We knew it from the information which Allah revealed in His Book on the tongue of His truthful Prophet.' Then Muhammad (S) will be brought there and he will be asked about the condition of his ummah. So he will testify for their purity, :justice and probity. And this is the meaning of the words of Allah

How will it be, then, when We bring from every people a witness and bring you as a (witness for these? (۴:۴۱

The author says: This theme is supported by other traditions narrated by as-Suyuti in ad-Durru 'l-manthur and others. But how is it that the Prophet would testify about his ?ummah that they were pure and just

It can be accepted only if it is taken to mean that he will testify for a selected group, not for the whole ummah. Otherwise, such traditions have to be rejected, as is self-.evident from the Qur'an and the sunnah

How can the Prophet sanction or approve all those oppressions, cruelties, tyrannies and massacres perpetrated by this ummah, and whose like was never seen in any of the previous nations? How can he testify that all

?those Pharaohs and taghuts of this ummah were pure, just and upright

What is this tradition, if not a calumny against this up-right religion? A joke with the realities of this illustrious faith? Moreover, it is based on the wrong idea that a hearsay !testimony is acceptable

The correct meaning of the verse may be seen in a tradition narrated from al-Baqir (a.s.) that he said: "Only the Imams and the Messengers will be witnesses for the people. And as for the (general) ummah, it is unthinkable that Allah would call them as witnesses - and there are among them those whose testimony is not accepted for a (bundle of vegetable." (al-Manaqib

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) said about the verse, that you may be witnesses...: "(It is) then (wrong) if you think that Allah in this verse means all the monotheists, the people of qiblah (i.e., the Muslims). Do you think that a person whose evidence is not acceptable a weight about ۳ kilogram) of date, Allah will call him = (اَلصّاع' in this world about a as-sa as a witness on the Day of Judgment and will accept his evidence in presence of all ?the previous nations

Certainly not. Allah does not mean (here) such of his creatures; He means only that ;ummah in which the prayer of Ibrahim was granted

;(you are the best ummah raised up for the (benefit of) men (۳:۱۱۰

and they are the medium ummah and they are the best ummah raised up for the men." (al - 'Ayyashi

(

The author says: We have described it under that verse with the help of the Qur'an .itself

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) narrates from his father, from the Prophet, that he said: “It is among the (bounties) which Allah gave to my ummah and (by which) He made them excel all other nations, that He gave them three attributes which (previously) were not ...given but to a prophet

And when He sent a prophet, made him a witness for his nation; and surely Allah, :Blessed and High is He, has made my ummah a witness for the creatures, as He says

so that the Messenger may be a witness for you, and you may be witnesses for the (people (۲۲:۷۸). (Qurbu 'l-asnad

The author says: This hadith is not in conflict with the above explanation, because the word ummah refers to that submissive ummah in which the prayer of Ibrahim (a.s.) .was accepted

Amiru '۱-mu'minin (a.s.) says, inter alia, in a hadith describing the Day of Judgment: “They will gather in a place where every one will be required to speak; (but) no one :shall speak

.(except he whom the Beneficent Allah permits and who speaks the right thing (۷۸:۳۸

Then the Messenger shall be asked to stand (and speak); and that is (the meaning of) :(His word to Muhammad (S

How will it be, then, when We bring from every people a witness and bring you as a .(witness for these? (۴:۴۱

And he is the witness of the witnesses, and the witnesses are the Messengers.” (al-('Ayyashi

Abu Basir, narrating from

the fifth or the sixth Imam, says: “I said to him: 'Did (Allah) order him (i.e., the Prophet, s.a.w. a.) to pray towards Baytu 'l-Maqdis?' He said: 'Yes. Don't you see that Allah, :Blessed and High is He!, says

And We had not made the qiblah which you had but that We might distinguish him (who follows the Messenger from him who turns back upon his heels...' ” (at-Tahdhib

The author says: This hadith shows that the words: which you had, are related to: the qiblah, and that the whole phrase refers to Baytu 'l-Maqdis; and it was the qiblah which the Messenger of Allah (S) had. As we have mentioned earlier, this explanation is in conformity with the context. Also, it supports what has been narrated in a hadith :(.from al-'Askari (a.s

The Meccans were attached to the Ka'bah. Therefore Allah wished to distinguish the“ followers of Muhammad (S), from his opponents, by following the qiblah which he disliked. And because the people of Medina were inclined towards Baytu 'l-Maqdis, He ordered them to go against it and to turn towards the Ka'bah, in order that He may show who follows Muhammad (S) (even) in that which is not to his liking; such a man, ” ...then, believes in his truth and agrees with him

It also shows the incorrectness of the interpretation, to which we had made a passing reference in the $$SUB[-Commentary] Commentary, and which runs as follows: The phrase, which you had, is the second object of the verb, We

had not made. Accordingly, the verse means: And We did not make the qiblah, that is, .the Ka'bah, which you had before Baytu 'l-Maqdis

In support of this interpretation, they quote the words, but that We might distinguish him who follows the Messenger from him who turns back upon his heels. The .absurdity of this interpretation and of this argument is self-evident

Az-Zubayri, narrating from as-Sadiq (a.s.) says: “I asked him: 'Will you not tell me about the faith, whether it is word with deed or (only) word without deed?' He said: 'The faith is deed, all of it; and (utterance of) the word is one of those deeds; (it is) obligatory from Allah, described in His Book; its light is clear, its proof well-.established; the Book bears witness for it and calls to it

And when Allah turned his Prophet towards the Ka'bah, away from Baytu 'l-Maqdis, the Muslims said to the Prophet: “What do you see (about) our prayers which we used to pray towards Baytu 'l-Maqdis? What shall be our position about these? And what shall be the position of those of us who have passed away and they were praying ”?towards Baytu '١-Maqdis

:(Then Allah revealed (the verse

and Allah was not going to make your faith to be fruitless; most surely Allah is .Affectionate, Merciful to the people

.”Thus Allah named the prayer as “faith

Whoever therefore fears Allah, guarding his limbs (from sins), fulfilling (obligation of) each of these limbs which Allah has laid down for it, he shall meet Allah

with perfect faith, (and he shall be) from the people of the Garden. And whoever acted falsely about any of these (limbs), or transgressed what Allah had ordered about it, he (shall meet Allah (as one) having an in-complete faith.' " (al-'Ayyashi

The author says: It has been narrated also by al-Kulayni. Although it says that the verse, and Allah was not going to make your faith fruitless..., was revealed after the qiblah was changed, yet it does not go against the explanation given in the .Commentary

The Prophet prayed towards Baytu 'l-Maqdis for thirteen years in Mecca, and" nineteen months in Medina.(۱) Then the Jews reviled him, saying: 'You are a follower .of our qiblah.' He was very much saddened because of it

Then one night he came out turning his face towards the horizons of the heaven. When it was morning, he prayed the dawn (prayer). Then when he had prayed two :(rak'ahs of zuhr, Jibril came and told him (the message of Allah

Indeed We see the turning of thy face to heaven, so We shall surely turn thee to a ;...qiblah which thou shalt like

then he took hold of the Prophet and turned him towards the Ka'bah, and those who were (praying) behind him turned their faces (likewise), until the men stood in place of .the women, and the women in place of the men

Thus, the early part of his prayer was towards Baytu '۱-Maqdis, and the latter part towards the Ka'bah. Then the news reached another mosque in

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The Prophet emigrated to Medina in the month of Rabi'u۱-awwal. The nineteenth - ۱ (.month after hijrah was Ramadan of the second year. (tr

Medina, and its people had already prayed two rak'ahs of 'asr (to Baytu '۱-Maqdis), .and they turned towards the (new) qiblah

So the early part of their prayer was to Baytu 'l-Maqdis and the latter part towards (the Ka'bah; so that mosque was named the Mosque of the Two Qiblahs." (al-Faqih

The author says: al-Qummi has narrated a similar hadith, with one variation that the .Prophet was in the mosque of Banu. Salim

Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) said explaining the words of Allah, turn then thy face towards the Sacred Mosque: "Face towards the qiblah, and do not turn away from the qiblah; otherwise your prayer will be void. For, Allah says to His Prophet concerning the obli… gatory prayer, turn then your face towards the Sacred Mosque; and wherever you (are, turn your face towards it." (al-'Ayyashi

The author says: There are numerous al-mustafidah(۱) traditions which say that this .verse was revealed about the obligatory prayer

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) said about the verse: Those whom We have given the Book recognize him as they recognize their sons: "This verse was revealed about the Jews :and the Christians. Allah, Blessed and High is He! says

Those whom We have given the Book recognize him, that is, recognize the Messenger of Allah (S), as they recognize their sons. For, surely Allah, Mighty and Great is He!, had revealed to them, in the Torah and the Injil and Zabur, the attributes of Muhammad .(S), and the attributes of his companions, as well as (the story of) his emigration

And this is

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۱ - al-Mustafidah (اَلْمُسْتَفِيضَةُ) = A tradition narrated by a great many narrators, but to a (.degree less than that required for mutawatir. (tr

:the meaning of) the words of Allah)

Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; and those with him are severe against the unbelievers, compassionate among themselves; you will see them bowing down, prostrating themselves, seeking grace from Allah and pleasure; their marks are in their faces because of the effect of prostration; that is their description in the Torah .(and their description in the Injil... (۴۸:۲۹

And this was the descrip-tion of the Messenger of Allah (S) and of his companions in the Torah. Thereafter, when Allah raised him up, the People of the Book recognized :him. (But they rejected him) as Allah, Great is His Majesty!, says

but when there came to them that which they did recognize, they disbelieved in him .((۲:۸۹

(al-Qummi)

The author says: A similar hadith has been narrated in al-Kafi from 'Ali (a.s.). Many Shiite traditions say that the words of Allah, wherever you are, Allah will bring you all together, has been revealed about the companions of al-Qa'im (a.s.). Some of those traditions say that it is applied to them according to the principle of the "flow of the ."Qur'an

A tradition, narrated by the Sunni narrators says that 'Ali (a.s.) said about the words of Allah, so that I may complete My favour on you: Completion of favour is the death in the state of Islam (i.e., to die as a Muslim)." Another Sunni hadith says that the .completion of favour is entering into the Garden

An Academic and Historical Discourse on Ways of Finding the Direction of Qiblah

The Muslims have to face towards the qiblah in prayer - and it is

an act of worship which each of them has to perform several times a day - and at the time of slaughtering an animal as well as at some other times. It compelled the .Muslims to find out the direction of the qiblah wherever they might be

In the beginning it was based on guess and rough estimates. Then the overwhelming need prompted the Muslim geographers and mathematicians to devise more .accurate methods to find its direction

They based their reckoning on the longitude and latitude of a place - they calculated the degree of inclination between its location and that of Mecca with the help of trigonometry and astronomy. They fixed the direction of qiblah in every town with the help of the well-known Indian Circle which fixed the meridian of a place and showed .the degree of its inclination from the qiblah

Then they started using the compass. Its hands pointed to the North and the South; and if the degree of inclination to Mecca was known beforehand, it was easy to fix the direction of the qiblah. It gradually replaced the Indian Circle, being a lot quicker and .easier to use

But both these endeavours of theirs - may Allah reward them for these - were not .free from defect and miscalculation

First: The Indian Circle: The latter geographers found out that the early scholars were not very accurate in their calculation of the longitude - and this had led to confusion in calculation of the degree of inclination, and consequently in

the fixing of the qiblah's direction. The early scholars were more accurate in finding .the latitude of a place, than its longitude

They used to fix the latitude of a place by measuring the altitude of the North Pole there. But fixing a longitude depended on measuring the distance between two places, and it was done by noting the time when a certain celestial event, like a solar or lunar eclipse, occurred in one place, and then calculating as to how much time had .elapsed before it appeared in the other place

Obviously, neither the old instruments were dependable enough, nor the means of .communications fast enough, to give this calculation the desired accuracy

With advancement of scientific apparatus and development of new means of communication, the need was felt to find a more accurate way of fixing the qiblah. The well-known scholar, Shaykh (Haydar Quli) Sardar Kabuli - Allah's mercy be on !him

Looked into this matter, and calculated the inclination of various places with the help of the modern sciences. He wrote on this subject his book Tuhfatu 'l-ajillah fi ma'rifati 'l-qiblah. It is a fine work, in which he explains scientifically, how to find out the direction of qiblah for a place; also he has given charts fixing the qiblah of various .towns

Allah helped him in his endeavour - may He reward him for it - in such a fine way that .his calculations showed a clear miracle of the Prophet

When the early Muslim scholars calculated the position of Medina, they

found that it was situated at ٢٥°n lat. ٧٥° ٢٠' long. The trouble was that al-mihrab niche) of the Mosque of the Prophet (based on the original direction) was not = (اَلمِحْرَابُ exactly to the direction which the newly calculated position was indicating. The religious scholars were always arguing on this subject, and they invented some .reasons to justify that "deviation", although none was based on reality

But Sardar Kabuli - may Allah have mercy on him! - showed clearly that Medina is situated on ٢۴°٥٧' lat. ٣٩°٥٩' long.; and that the inclination towards Mecca is ٠°۴٥'. .And the niche of the Prophet's Mosque has exactly the same inclination

By this calculation, one more miracle of the Prophet came to light; it was the direction to which he turned his face while he was praying, and about which he later said that Jibril took hold of his hand and turned him towards the Ka'bah. Truth was what Allah .and His Messenger said

After him, came the great mathematician, 'Abdu 'r-Razzaq al-Bagha'iri - Allah's mercy be on him - and he calculated the direction of the qiblah of most of the towns of the world, and published it in his book; his charts fix the qiblah of more than ١,٥٠٠ towns. In .this way, the favour of Allah was completed about the direction of the qiblah

Second: The Compass: It has been established that the Earth's magnetic Poles are not identical with its geographical Poles. First of all, the magnetic Poles have been changing

.from time to time

Second, the magnetic North Pole is at a distance of about one thousand miles from the geographical North Pole. Obviously, the compass does not show the exact direction of the qiblah; in some places the deviation may reach a degree that cannot .be allowed

Now, the leading mathematician, Husayn 'Ali Razm Ara, undertook these days (i.e., the ١٣٣٢nd year of the solar hijri calendar) to solve this problem. He calculated the difference between the magnetic and geographical Poles at various places, and determined the degrees of inclination of the qiblah from the magnetic Pole in respect of about one thousand towns. Then he invented his compass which fixes the qiblah of .those places very accurately

This compass is now in general use in the Muslim world. May Allah reward him for his .endeavours

A Sociological Essay on the meaning of Qiblah and its Benefits

Let us look at the social structure of humanity. Ponder on society per se, and you will admit that it was the human nature which brought it into being and developed it with .its many-sided aspects

It did so because of the inspiration it received from Allah - the divinely-gifted instinct which made a man realize that he depends on collective efforts of other men for his survival and development. That is why human beings rely on society and keep their .activities within the bounds of the social laws

Then he acquired knowledge - mental images - related to his surrounding matter, and about his own needs and activities. What creates a relation - positive or negative - between

a man and his activities is the knowledge of their various properties; like the knowledge that something is good or bad, this should be done, that should be .avoided. In fact, all the fundamental concepts of sociology come under this category

It covers leader-ship and subordination, ownership and jurisdiction, collective and individual affairs, and in short, all the common rules and values as well as the national .or tribal traditions and customs

Even the last mentioned rites which change from nation to nation, from region to region and from era to era, have been produced by the human nature which worked .according to the divinely-bestowed instinct

All these exoteric aspects of society are symbols of esoteric ideas and ideals; human nature sees in them fulfilment of its inner craving, and thus moves towards it in .appropriate way - by taking it, discarding it, doing it, leaving it or perfecting it

Now, Allah is free from matter and its concomitants; He can never be perceived by any physical sense. How can people turn towards Him, especially if they want their inner devotion manifested in their actions - because actions are confined within .material limits

It can only be done by representing the esoteric ideas with manifest actions. Various feelings and emotions are represented with various appropriate physical postures: .Man prostrates to show his self-abasement; and bows down to glorify the Creator

Circumambulation around the Ka'bah represents self-sacrifice. Standing in prayer portrays the Creator's greatness, and wudu' and ritual bath are intended to make one spiritually clean, to

.prepare oneself for Divine Presence

Undoubtedly, complete attention towards God during the prayer is the soul of the worship. Without total undiverted attention worship has no life, no vitality. And the attention depends on such representations for its existence, continuation and .perfection

The worshippers of idols, celestial bodies or other material things (like trees, animals and/or human beings) stand face to face with their deities and idols, turning towards (them with their bodies maintaining close proximity with them.(١

Islam came to verify the previous religions brought by the prophets; it is the most comprehensive and complete Divine Religion. It has appointed the Ka'bah as the qiblah - the direction to which people should turn during prayer (and no one is .excused from prayer in any condition) wherever they may be in the world

They are further obliged (or encouraged) to turn towards it in certain conditions, and forbidden to face it or keep it behind their backs in some other conditions. Thus, a .Muslim is obliged to keep his attention to the House of Allah

He is not to forget his Lord in private or in public, in his working hours or in sleep, while standing up or sitting down in prayer, or in other actions - not even in his meanest (condition.(٢

The above discourse looked at the benefits which an individual derives from the qiblah. If we ponder on this rule from sociological point of view, then its effects are even more import-ant and far-reaching. It has united all the Muslims - of diverse

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But that method, invented by human mind, was rejected by Divine religions brought -١ by the prophets of God, because instead of fixing the attention to God, it actually diverted the attention towards those idols etc., making them into partners of God in worship. Yet, the original aim - a physical manifestation of undiverted attention

towards God – was good and in conformity with demands of the human nature, provided it could be achieved without any risk of falling into polytheism. (tr.)

۲– It is unlawful to face towards the qiblah, or to keep the qiblah on backside, while urinating or relieving the bowels. Therefore, a Muslim has to remember the direction of qiblah even at that time. (tr.)

.places and different times – fixing their attention to one point

The qiblah, therefore, portrays that they are one in their belief, connected to each other in their social structure, and brothers in Islam. If such a fine spirit permeates the material and ideological lives of the individuals and groups, the society shall reach its highest point of perfection; and the most comprehensive and all-encompassing unity .shall manifest itself in the Muslim society

Allah has especially bestowed this favour on His Muslim servants. By this favour He has protected their religious unity – even now when they have fallen apart in so many groups, have been divided into so many sects and are following so many diverse .ideologies

.We are thankful to Allah for His favours

Suratul Baqarah: Verse ۱۵۲

point

)۱۵۲ (فَٱذْكُرُونِيٓ أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَٱشْكُرُواْ لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ

Therefore remember Me, I will remember you, and be thankful to Me, and do not be .(ungrateful to Me (۱۵۲

Commentary

Allah first mentioned His favour on the Muslims that He sent to them a Prophet from among them – a favour that cannot be measured in any way. Then he pointed to another great favour in that He guided them to the straight path and led them to the .highest perfection

Then came the third favour of giving them a qiblah of their own – through that rule, their religion began its journey to perfection, their worship was unified and their .religious and social virtues were enhanced

Reminding them of these three-fold favours, He calls them to remember Him and

to be thankful to Him. They should remember Him with their devotion and obedience, so that He remembers them with His favour. He will increase for them His bounty and grace, if they are thankful to Him, and if they are not ungrateful for His favours. He :had already said to them

and remember your Lord when you forget and say: 'May be my Lord will guide me to a ;(nearer course to the right than this" (۱۸:۲۴

If you are grateful, I would certainly give you more; and if you are ungrateful, My .(chastisement is truly severe (۱۴:۷

These two verses were revealed before the verse of the qiblah in this chapter. "adh-Dhikr" (اَلذِّکـْرُ = "remembrance) is sometimes used as opposite of "al-ghaflah = اَلغـَفْلـَه) :inattention and heedlessness). Allah says =

and do not follow him whose heart We have made inattentive to Our remembrance .((۱۸:۲۸

Inattention is "not knowing that one knows - although the original knowledge is present in memory". "Remembrance", as its opposite, means "knowing that one ."knows

The word "remembrance" at other times is used as opposite to "an-nisyan" (اَلنِّسْـیانُ = forgetfulness). Forgetfulness is "cessation of knowledge from mind"; and as its opposite, remembrance means "presence of knowledge in mind". It is to this meaning :that the words of Allah refer in the verse

.(and remember your Lord when you forget... (۱۸:۲۴

This remembrance, like its oppo-site "forgetfulness", is a concept which has its own special effects and exclusive characteristics. Sometimes when those effects and characteristics are found, we say that one

remembers, although there is no actual remembrance; or that one has forgotten, .although there is no actual forgetfulness

For example, if you do not come to the aid of your friend – when you know that he needs your help – then people say that: “You have forgotten him”, although in fact you .remember him very well

The word “remembrance” is also used in the same way. Apparently, the use of this word for “verbal remembrance” (e.g., reciting or repeating the names of Allah) comes in this category, because you cannot express something in words unless you remem… :ber it in mind. Allah says

.(Say; “I will recite to you an account (a remembrance) of him” (۱۸:۸۳

There are many other examples like it. But if verbal remembrance is counted as a real .meaning of the word 'remembrance' then it will be one of its (lower) degrees

:However, remembrance is of many degrees. Allah says

;(now surely by Allah's remembrance are the hearts set at rest (۱۳:۲۸

And remember your Lord within yourself humbly and fearing and in a voice not loud in ;(the morning and the evening, and be not of the heedless ones (۷:۲۰۵

then remember Allah as you remember your fathers, rather a more intense .(remembrance (۲:۲۰۰

.Now, it is the thought or feeling which becomes intense, not the words

:Also, we have quoted the above verse

and remember your Lord when you forget and say: “May be my Lord will guide me to .(a nearer course to the right than this” (۱۸:۲۴

:The last sentence, beginning with Say

May be...", tells the servant to hope for a rank higher than his present one. Its" connotation will be as follows: If you slip down to a lower rank, that is, if you forget what you knew before, then remember your Lord and then you may hope for a higher .rank that is nearer to the right course than the present one

It shows that the remembrance of the heart, per se, is of many degrees. It also proves the validity of the saying, "Remembrance is the presence of an idea in the .mind"; because even "presence" has various degrees and ranks

Remember Me: In this sentence, the object "Me" refers to Allah. As we explained above, remembrance is the knowledge of knowledge; and knowledge is defined as "attainment of the form and idea of a thing in the mind of the Knower". Knowledge .con-fines the thing so known and encompasses it within the knower's mind

Obviously, Allah cannot be known, or remembered (i.e., known to be known) in any :way like this. He is beyond the description of describers. He Himself says

Hollowed be Allah, from what they describe, except the servants of Allah, freed (from ;(sins) (۳۷:۱۵۹-۱۶۰

.(they do not comprehend Him in knowledge (۲۰:۱۱۰

We shall write later on, Allah willing, somethings related to these two verses.) In view) of this established fact, if we were to say that the words, "Remember Me", have been used here in their real, and not metaphorical sense, then we will have to say that man ,has

or can have, a know-ledge whose definition would be quite different from the one .known to us

Traditions

Numerous traditions, on the virtue of remembrance of Allah, have been narrated by the Shi'ah and Sunni narrators. For example, it has been narrated through various ".chains of narrators that: "Remembrance of Allah is good in all conditions

It has been narrated that the Messenger of Allah (S) came up to his companions, and said: "Feast you in the meadows of the Garden." They said: "O Messenger of Allah! And what are the meadows of the Garden?" He said: "The gatherings of remembrance; go .(there in the mornings and in the evenings and remember (Allah

And whoever likes to know (what is) his position near Allah, he should see what is the position of Allah near him (i.e., in his heart); because surely Allah gives a servant the .same position which the servant gives to Allah, vis-à-vis, his own self

And know that your best deeds (near your King) and the purest and the highest of them in ranks, and the best of all that the sun shines on, is the remembrance of Allah, :the High, because Allah, the High, has said concerning His Own Self

I am the companion of him who remembers Me'; and He, the High One, has said:' 'Therefore remember Me; I will remember you with My bounty; you remember Me with obedience and worship, I will remember you with bounties, and beneficence, and (comfort, and (My) pleasure.' " ('Uddatu' d-da'i

:as-Sadiq (a.s.) said

p: ۲۴۶

Surely Allah, the Blessed, the High, says: 'Whoever is too preoccupied with My" remembrance to be able to ask Me (for his needs), I give him the best of what I give to (him who asks Me.'" (al-Mahasin; ad-Da'awat, ar-Rawandi

al-Husayn al-Bazzaz said: "Abu Abdillah (a.s.) told me: 'Should I not tell you the most difficult (thing) which Allah has made obligatory for His creatures?' I said: 'Yes, certainly.' He said: 'To do justice to the people (even) against yourself, and your .beneficence to your brother, and remembrance of Allah in every place

Why, (by remembrance) I do not mean (recitation of): "Glory be to Allah, and praise be to Allah, and there is no god except Allah, and Allah is Great" - although this is from that (i.e., it is one aspect of remembrance); but remembrance of Allah in every place (means that you should remember Him) when you rush to His obedience or to His (disobedience." (Ma 'ani 'l-akhbar

The author says: This theme has been narrated through numerous chains from the Prophet and his Ahlu 'l-bayt (peace be on them all); and there is, in some of them, the :following addition: "And it is the words of Allah

Surely those who fear (Allah), when a visitation from the Satan afflicts them they (become mindful (they remember), then lo! they see." (۷:۲۰۱

The Prophet said: "Allah says: 'When I know that the pre-dominant trait of My servant is to be engrossed in Me, I transfer his desire to My invocation and My secret

conversation. When My servant becomes like this (i.e., when he attains this position), then if he wants to (i.e., if he is about to) forget, I come between him and his .(forgetfulness (i.e., I protect him from it

They are truly My friends; they are truly the heroes; it is they that when I want to destroy the people of the earth in chastisement, I remove it (the chastisement) from (them because of those heroes.' " ('Uddatu 'd-da'i

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "Allah, the High, has said: 'O son of Adam! Remember Me in your mind, I will remember you in My Self; O Son of Adam! Remember Me in seclusion, I will remember you in seclusion; remember Me in a gathering, I will remember you in a " '.gathering better than your gathering

And he said: "No servant remembers Allah in an assembly of the people but Allah (remembers him in the assembly of the angels". (al-Mahasin

The author says: Both groups, that is, the Shi'ah and the Sunnis, have narrated this .theme with numerous asnad

As-Suyuti writes in ad-Durru 'l-manthur: "at-Tabarani, Ibn Marduwayh and al-Bayhaqi (in his Shu'abu 'l-iman) have narrated from Ibn Mas'ud that he said: 'The :Messenger of Allah said

Whoever is given four (things) is (also) given (other) four (things). And its explanation" is (found) in the Book of Allah. Whoever is given remembrance, Allah remembers him, because Allah says, 'Remember Me, I will remember you'; and whoever is given ad-du'a' (اَلدُّعَاءُ = (invocation) is given response (i.e., its acceptance),

because Allah says; 'Call on Me, I will answer you'; and whoever is given thankfulness, is given increase, because Allah says, 'If you are grateful, I will certainly give you more'; and whoever is given to ask forgiveness, is given pardon, because Allah says, " ' " '.'Ask forgiveness of your Lord, surely He is the most Forgiving

It is written in the same book: "Sa'id ibn Mansur, Ibnu '۱-Mundhir and al-Bayhaqi (in his Shu'abu '۱-iman) narrate from Khalid ibn Abi 'Imran that he said that the Messenger of Allah said: 'Whoever obeys Allah, he indeed has remembered Allah, even if his prayer and his fast and his recitation of the Qur'an are small in quantity. And whoever disobeys Allah, he indeed has forgotten Allah, even if his prayer and his " '.fast and his recitation of the Qur'an are abundant

The author says: This tradition indicates that man commits sin only when he forgets Allah and becomes inattentive to Him. Had he remembered what was the reality .behind his sin and what effect it would produce, he would not have gone near it

If someone disobeys Allah - and does not care even if he is reminded of Him - and gives no importance to his Lord and Creator, then he is a transgressor (who) does not know the dignity and the sublime majesty of his Lord, nor does he understand how .Allah encompasses every thing

This theme is also found in another tradition, which has been narrated in ad-Durru '۱-manthur from Abu

Hind ad-Dari who said that the Prophet said: “Allah says: 'Remember Me by obeying .Me, I will remember you with My forgiveness

And whoever remembers Me - and he is obedient - then it is My duty to remember him with My forgiveness. And whoever remembers Me - and he is disobedient - then it ” '...is a right on Me to remember him with hate

The last sentence of this hadith has used the word, remembrance (at the time of disobedience), in its opposite meaning; the verse under discussion and other .traditions used the word 'forgetfulness' to convey that same idea

.We shall give some more details of this subject elsewhere

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۱۵۳ – ۱۵۷

point

(۱۵۳) يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱسْتَعِينُواْ بِٱلصَّبْرِ وَٱلصَّلَوٰةِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ مَعَ ٱلصَّـٰبِرِينَ

(۱۵۴) وَلَا تَقُولُواْ لِمَن يُقْتَلُ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ أَمْوَٰتٌۢ ۚ بَلْ أَحْيَآءٌ وَلَـٰكِن لَّا تَشْعُرُونَ

(۱۵۵) وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُم بِشَىْءٍ مِّنَ ٱلْخَوْفِ وَٱلْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ ٱلْأَمْوَٰلِ وَٱلْأَنفُسِ وَٱلثَّمَرَٰتِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ ٱلصَّـٰبِرِينَ

(۱۵۶) ٱلَّذِينَ إِذَآ أَصَـٰبَتْهُم مُّصِيبَةٌ قَالُوٓاْ إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّآ إِلَيْهِ رَٰجِعُونَ

(۱۵۷) أُوْلَـٰٓئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَٰتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۖ وَأُوْلَـٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْمُهْتَدُونَ

O you who believe! seek assistance through patience and prayer; surely Allah is with .(the patient ones (۱۵۳

And do not speak of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead; nay, (they are) alive, .(but you do not perceive (۱۵۴

And We will most certainly try you with somewhat of fear and hunger and loss of ,(property and lives and fruits; and give good news to the patient ones (۱۵۵

who, when a misfortune befalls them, say: “Surely we are Allah's and to Him

.(we shall surely return" (١٥۶

Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord, and those are the .(followers of the right course (١٥٧

General Comment

A single theme joins the five verses like a pearl-string; the sentences form a sequence and the topic is developed harmoniously; the beginning leads to the end, and the points to the beginning. It shows that they were revealed together, not .separately

The context indicates that they must have been revealed shortly before the law of al-jihad (اَلجِهَادُ = war in the way of Allah) was promulgated and the Muslims were ordered .to fight in the cause of religion

The verses prepare the believers for some trials which they will have to undergo, some misfortunes which will befall them. Not the usual type of trial and hardship, but some extraordinary misfortunes which will afflict the whole community and will .continue, recurring every now and then

Man, like any other creature in this world, always faces some hardships and troubles .which disturb and disrupt the pattern of his personal life

Death, sickness, fear, hunger, grief, poverty and deprivation are but a few examples of such personal misfortunes. It is the course which Allah has laid down for His servants. This world is a place of struggle and competition; the life is a chain of never .ending changes and transformations

And you shall not find any alteration in the course of Allah; and you shall not find any .(change in the course of Allah (٣٥:۴٣

Although personal afflictions and misfortunes are hard

to bear for the man so affected, yet they are not as crushing, bewildering and frightening as those which affect the whole community. When an individual is afflicted by a misfortune, he seeks help of others, complementing his own wisdom, .determination and steadiness with those of his relatives, friends and compatriots

But when a misfortune or hardship afflicts the whole community, it stuns them all; it numbs their minds, and clouds their vision; it looks as if the whole society has lost its .collective wisdom. It disrupts not only the individual, but even the collective life

Fear terrorizes, panic overwhelms, and minds boggle down; courage deserts and dread reigns supreme. A collective misfortune is, in short, much more harder to bear .and much more bitter in taste. And it is these that the verse point to

But not every collective affliction, like epidemic or femine. What the verses describe is in all-encompassing affliction which shall be brought about as a consequence of the believers' faith itself. They have accepted the belief of monotheism; they have .answered the call of the truth

The whole world and especially their own kith and kin are united against them. The enemies are trying, with all the forces at their command, to extinguish the light of .Allah, to erase the word of justice, to nullify the call of truth

The conflict has reached a stage where both parties realize that fighting is the only way out. Both parties have exhausted all other resources they had. The unbelievers first had tried

to achieve their goal by arguments and mischief mongering, by whispering campaigns .and unsettling rumours

But all was in vain. All their endeavours failed to give them any satisfaction - they did not harm the Muslims in the way they wanted. Now, from their point of view, nothing was left but to wage war against the Muslims and to annihilate them. Only then, the .path of truth could be blocked and the bright light of Islam extinguished

As from the believers' point of view, only the fighting could now help there in their endeavour to propagate the creed of mono-theism, to spread the true religion and just rule, to cut at the root of falsehood. The past experience has proved that truth gains strength only when falsehood is removed - and now it cannot be removed .except by force

In short, the verses indicate that the great trial is near at hand - it mentions martyrdom in the way of Allah, and praises it laudably, saying that it is not a death, it is life - and what a life indeed! Accordingly death in the way of Allah is a distinction which .is desirable - not a thing to dislike or fear

The verses encourage the believers to fight for Islam. They are told that there is coming to them a trial, a hardship. Only if they bear it patiently, they shall reach the high ranks of spiritual perfection, receiving the blessings and mercy of Allah, and .being guided aright by Divine Guidance

Also, it

tells them how they may get help in bearing those burdens - they should seek assistance through patience and prayer. Patience will protect them from fear and anguish, and will save their plans from disruption. As for prayer, it will turn their attention to their Lord, and will help them in putting all their affairs in the hands of the .Almighty Allah, because all power belongs to Him

Commentary

Qur’an: O you who believe! seek assistance through patience and prayer; surely Allah is with the patient ones: We have explained briefly about patience and prayer, under :the verse

And seek assistance through patience and prayer; and most surely it is a hard thing .(except for the humble ones (۲:۴۵

Patience is one of the most important characteristics, which the Qur'an praises very highly. It repeatedly tells the believers to be patient - there are about seventy verses :on this theme. It praises it in such laud-able ways as

and bear patiently that which befalls you; surely it is of the acts which require ... ;(determination (۳۱:۱۷

And none are made to receive it but those who are patient, and none are made to ;(receive it but those who have a mighty good fortune (۴۱: ۳۵

.(only the patient will be paid back their reward in full without measure (۳۹:۱۰

Likewise, prayer is one of the greatest acts of worship and devotion which the Qur'an :always exhorts the believers to do. It has been praised in these words

.(surely prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil (۲۹:۴۵

Wherever Allah exhorts

.the people to some good deeds, prayer is always placed at the head of the list

Then Allah praises patience that Allah is with those who have got this virtue: In this respect this verse differs from the verse ۲:۴۵ which had focused attention on prayer; .and most surely it is a hard thing except for the humble ones

But this verse singles out the patience, because here the talk is about facing the difficulties and fighting against the enemies; and in this context patience acquires a .greater importance. Surely Allah is with the patient ones

:It is a special proximity unlike the company mentioned in the verse

.(and He is with you wherever you are (۱۳:۴

This latter verse says that Allah controls your affairs and His knowledge encompasses you; while the verse under discussion means that Allah helps and aids the patient .ones. Patience, therefore, is the key to get relief from distress

Qur'an: And do not speak of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead; nay, (they are) alive, but you do not perceive: Some exegetes have said that when the verse says that the martyrs are alive, it actually means that their good names will continue for ever and their heroism will always be remembered with gratitude. Their argument is :as follows

The verse is addressed to the Muslims, who already believe in Allah, His Messenger" and the Day of Judgment; they are also sure of the life hereafter. They have accepted the call of truth, and have already heard a

.lot of verses which speak of the Resurrection

They know that a man's life does not end with death. How could they speak of the martyrs as dead? Moreover, this verse affirms only about the martyrs that they are alive; and describes it as their especial excellence vis-à-vis other believers and the .unbelievers

But we know that life after death is not confined to one group, it is a general phenomenon, which covers the whole mankind. Therefore, the life mentioned here must be something special, which is reserved for those who are slain in the way of ".Allah - and that is their eternal name and ever-lasting fame

:But this interpretation is unacceptable, because of the following reasons

First: The life which they have mentioned is not real life; it is an imaginary thing, which has no relation with reality. Such unreal and imaginary things do not deserve to be :included in Divine Speech. Allah calls to reality, to truth; and says

.(and what is there after the truth but error? (۱۰:۳۲

:Of course, Ibrahim (a.s.) had prayed to Allah

.(And make for me a truthful tongue among the posterity (۲۶:۸۴

But what he meant by "a truthful tongue" was continuation of his true mission after him; he did not mean only that his good name be remembered and his praise be sung .by coming generations

Of course, such imaginary exegesis, such false interpretation is more in line with materialists' thinking. They believe that soul is a material thing, life,is a development of matter; once a man dies the

life comes to an end, there is nothing to continue after death; as such, there is no life :hereafter. But applying that idea to sociology, they encountered a great difficulty

The fact is that man by nature believes in continuation of life after death, his instinct tells him that there is happiness and unhappiness in the other world where he goes after death; and if he wants to enjoy happiness there, he will have to sacrifice many .comforts of this life

This is specially true about great affairs and ideals which cannot be established except when their supporters and adherents are willing to die for them, to sacrifice .their lives for the cause. They have to die so that others may live

Now, the dilemma of the atheists and materialists was this: If death is the end of life, if man, after his death, is lost for ever, then why should he sacrifice his life so that others may live? Why should he deprive himself of the comforts and enjoyments ?which he can easily get through injustice and tyranny? Just to let others live in peace

What has he got to gain by his sacrifice? Nothing. No sensible man gives something if he is not getting something in return. Human nature rejects the concept of giving without receiving, of leaving something without getting something in exchange. It rejects the idea of dying to enable others to live, the notion of denying oneself the .enjoyment of this short life so that others may enjoy it

When

the materialists realized the trouble they were in, they tried to make up this shortcoming by inventing these imaginary gains which had no existence except in :their own minds. They said

A man, emancipated from fetters of superstitions and myths, must sacrifice his life for his country and for other noble goals; this sacrifice will make him immortal because .his good name and widespread fame will remain alive for ever

Likewise, he should deny himself some enjoyments of life so that others may benefit from those things. In this way, society and civilization will remain on right track and the social justice will reign supreme. And that man, because of his sacrifice, will get a .noble and sublime life

Would that I knew who will enjoy that noble life when the man himself is dead, when his physical body has perished, and with it have gone all traces of life including perceptions and feelings? Who will then feel and enjoy that "noble life"? Isn't it just a ?delirious raving

Second: The last phrase of the verse, " but you do not perceive," does not agree with that explanation. If that was the meaning of "life", Allah should have said: nay, they are alive because their good name will remain for ever, and people will always sing their praises generation after generation. Obviously, such description would have proved much more satisfying and encouraging, and would have cheered them up to a ."greater degree than the phrase, "but you do not perceive

- Third: A similar verse

which in a way also explains it - describes the promised life in such a way as not to :allow that interpretation

And reckon not those who are killed in Allah's way as dead; nay, they are alive (and) are provided sustenance from their Lord; Rejoicing in what Allah has given them out of His grace, and they rejoice for the sake of those who, (being left) behind them have not yet joined them, that they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve. They rejoice on account of favour from Allah and (His) grace, and that Allah will not waste the reward .(of the believers (۳:۱۶۹-۱۷۱

.Clearly, it is a description of a real, not imaginary, life

Fourth: It is not difficult to accept that some Muslims, in the middle of the Prophet's era, were unaware of the life after death. What was very clearly mentioned in the Qur'an was the Resurrection on the Day of Judgment. But so far as the life of al-barzakh (اَلبَرْزَخُ = the period between death and the Day of Judgment) is concerned, it has been described in the Qur'an, but not so clearly as not to leave any room for .ambiguity

That is why not all the Muslims are agreed on this subject - even today some of them do not accept it. (These are those who believe that soul is not immaterial; that man perishes on death; and Allah will raise him again for judging him on the Day of (.Judgment

This verse, therefore, could have

been revealed to affirm that the martyrs were alive in al-barzakh. May be, there were .some believers who were not aware of it, even if others knew it

In short, the verse speaks of a real, not imaginary, life. Allah, in several places, has counted the life of an unbeliever after his death as a destruction and perdition. For :example

.(and (they) made their people to alight into the abode of perdition (۱۴:۲۸ ...

So, it is the life of bliss that is true life, and it is only the believers who will live that life, :as Allah says

.(and as for the next abode, that most surely is the life - did they but know (۲۹:۶۴

They did not know it because their senses could perceive only the material aspects of this world's life. As they did not perceive what was beyond their limited perception, .they could not differentiate between extinction and life after death

They thought that there was nothing after death but extinction. That delusion, that conjecture was common to believers and unbelievers alike. That is why Allah said: ."nay, (they are) alive, but you do not perceive," that is, by your senses

:The same is the import of the last phrase in the verse

,(that most surely is the life - did they but know (۲۹:۶۴

:that is, with certainty, as He says in the verse

Nay! if you had known with a knowledge of certainty, you should most certainly have .(seen the hell (۱۰۲:۵-۶

The meaning of the verse, then, is as follows - and

Allah knows better! And do not say about those who are slain in the way of Allah that they are dead. You should not think that they have become extinct, have perished.

Of course, you generally think that death is extinction; in your language death is used as opposite of life; and this delusion is supported by your senses. But it is not correct. The martyrs are not dead, in that they are not extinct; they are alive although you do not perceive that life by your senses, by your perceptions.

This talk was addressed to the believers, although majority of them - if not all - knew that man's life continues after his death. It was done to draw their attention to a fact known to them. The aim was to cheer them up by reminding them of this reality, in order that they should not grieve, should not be perturbed, should not loose their hearts, when death faces them or their dear ones in the way of Allah.

The only thing that the relatives would be afflicted with, in such cases, is separation from their martyr for a few days, as long as they themselves are alive in this world.

And this temporary separation is not a big problem - especially if compared to the pleasure of Allah, and to the bounties bestowed on the martyr, like the pleasant life and everlasting grace. And the pleasure of Allah is the greatest bounty and bliss.

In this respect, the verse is not unlike

:the previously explained one where Allah tells His Prophet

.(The truth is from your Lord, therefore you should not be of the doubters (۲:۱۴۷

We know that the Prophet was the first and foremost of those who were sure of the Divine signs and communications. Yet he was told not to be of the doubters. This mode is generally used to show that the subject is so clear, so well-known and so well .established that there is no room for any conflicting thought to come into mind

The Life of al-Barzakh

the period = اَلْــبَرْزَخُ) This verse clearly proves that man remains alive in al-barzakh between one's death and the Day of Resurrection). The same is the import of the :other verse on this subject

And reckon not those who are killed in Allah's way as dead; nay, they are alive (and) .(are provided sustenance from their Lord (۳:۱۶۹

Many other verses prove this reality and we shall mention some of them at the end of .this essay

A very strange interpretation has been given to this verse by some people. They say that it was revealed about the martyrs of Badr, and therefore it is reserved exclusively for those martyrs; it cannot be applied to others who are slain in the way .of Allah

A scholar has made an interesting comment on this explanation. Writing about the preceding verse, "seek assistance through patience and prayer," he prays to Allah to !give him patience and forbearance to suffer such interpretations

Would that I knew what do they mean by

that explanation. On one hand, they say that man perishes after death or murder; when his body disintegrates, he becomes extinct. If so, then how could the martyrs of ?Badr remain alive after being slain

Was it as a miracle? Was it because Allah had given them a distinction and excellence, which was denied to all the prophets, messengers and friends of Allah, not expecting even the Holy Prophet of Islam? If there is no life after death, then keeping them alive .after their martyrdom is not a miracle - it is an impossibility

And a miracle does not cover an impossible thing. If it is asserted that such a self-evident preposition was negated for those martyrs, then no confidence can be put in .any self-evident truth - let alone other principles

Or, do they mean that people's perceptions were mistaken about the condition of those martyrs? The martyrs were alive, were getting sustenance from their Lord, were eating, drinking and enjoying all the comforts of life - far away from the range of .people's perceptions

And what the people had seen and perceived with their senses - that the martyrs were killed, their bodies mutilated, their senses gone, and their physique disin... .tegrated - was just a delusion, and nothing of this sort had happened in reality

If this is what they mean, if people's senses could be so deluded - perceiving correctly in one case and wrongly in another, without any differentiating cause - then no trust can be put in any of the

senses at all. Then, may be, we will perceive a non-existent as existing and an existing thing as non-existent. How can a sensible person speak like that? It is nothing but .sophistry

However, that explanation somewhat follows the line adopted by a large group of the scholars of traditions. The latter believe that the things mentioned in the Qur'an and traditions, which are beyond our perception - like angels and souls of believers and .other such things - are material and physical

They are ethereal bodies which may enter and penetrate dense and solid bodies, appearing thus in the form of man, for example, doing all that humans do; they possess powers and properties like ours, except that they are not governed by physical laws: they do not suffer any change or alteration, nor any composition or .disintegration; they are not subject to natural life and death

When Allah wants them to appear, they manifest themselves to our senses; and when He does not want so, or wants them not to appear, they do not appear. It depends entirely on a special will of Allah; there is nothing in their senses, or in their ."bodies", to tip the scale on this side or that

Such an idea is based on rejection of the system of cause and effect in the world. If such assertions were true, then all the intellectual realities, all the academic principles, will be null and void - not to speak of the fundamentals of religion. Even "those "sublime ethereal bodies

.which are supposedly beyond the reach of cause-and-effect) will be negated)

The above description, however, proves that the verse speaks about the life of al-barzakh; it is also called the world of the grave, the period between one's death and the Day of Resurrection; it is the world where the dead person is rewarded or punished until the Day of Resurrection.

:Some other verses speaking about al-barzakh are as follows

:There are the three verses already quoted

And reckon not those who are killed in Allah's way as dead; nay, they are alive (and) are provided sustenance from their Lord; Rejoicing in what Allah has given them out of His grace, and they rejoice for the sake of those who, (being left) behind them, have not yet joined them, that they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve. They rejoice on account of favour from Allah and (His) grace, and that Allah will not waste .(the reward of the believers (۳:۱۶۹ - ۱۷۱

We have already shown how these verses, being similar to the one under discussion, prove the life of al-barzakh. Those who think that these verses were revealed exclusively for the martyrs of Badr, should ponder on the wordings of these three, because they indicate that not only the martyrs but also other believers enjoy the life after death, and rejoice by favour and grace of Allah bestowed on them.

Until when death overtakes one of them, he says: "Send me back, my Lord, send me back: Haply I may do good in

that which I have left." By no means! it is a (mere) word that he speaks; and before .(them is al-barzakh until the day they are reaised (٢٣:٩٩ - ١٠٠

It very clearly shows that there is an intermediate life between this world's and the one which they will live after the Resurrection. Further explanation will be given when .we shall write about this verse, Allah willing

And those who do not hope for Our meeting, say: "Why have not angels been sent down upon us, or (why) do we not see our Lord?" Now certainly they are too proud of themselves and have revolted a great revolt. On the day when they shall see the ;angels

clearly it refers to the time when they will see the angels for the first time, that is, the) (;time of death - as is described in many other verses

there shall be no joy on that day for the guilty, and they shall say: "It is a forbidden thing totally prohibited; And We shall proceed to what they have done of deeds, so We shall render them as scattered floating dust. The dwellers of the garden shall on that day be in a better abiding place and a better resting place. And on the day when the heaven shall burst asunder with the clouds; (now it speaks about the Day of Resurrection;) and the angels shall be sent down a sending. The kingdom on that day shall rightly belong to the Beneficent God, and a hard

.(day shall it be for the unbelievers (۲۵:۲۱-۲۶

It very clearly proves the life of al-barzakh. Further details will be given in its proper .place, Allah willing

They shall say: “Our Lord! twice didst Thou give us death, and twice hast Thou given .(us life, so we do confess our faults; is there then a way to get out?” (۴۰:۱۱

They will say it on the Day of Resurrection. It means that by that time there would be two deaths and two lives. It can be explained only if we accept the life and death of al-barzakh. Otherwise, there shall be only one death between this life and that of the :Day of Resurrection. We have explained it to some extent under the verse

How do you deny Allah and you were dead and He gave you life? Again He will cause .(you to die and again bring you to life; then you shall be brought back to Him (۲:۲۸

and the most evil punishment overtook Pharaoh's people: The Fire, they are ... brought before it (every) morning and evening; and on the day when the hour shall .(come to pass: Make Pharaoh's people enter the severest chastisement (۴۰:۴۶

It is known that the Day of Resurrection shall have no morning or evening. Clearly, the day when the hour shall come to pass, that is, the Day of Resurrection is other than .the day of al-barzakh which has the mornings and evenings

.There are many other verses which indicate, or from which we may infer, this reality

:For example

By Allah, most certainly We sent (messengers) to nations before, but the Satan made their deeds fair-seeming to them, so he is their guardian today, and they shall have a .(painful punishment (16:63

The Immateriality of the Soul

The verse under discussion, as well as those quoted above, points to another more comprehensive reality and that is the immateriality of the soul. The soul is something other than matter and body; it is beyond the jurisdiction of the rules governing matter .and body, or those affecting various material compounds and mixtures

Yet, it has a special relationship with the body - keeping it alive, managing its multifarious functions and activities and enabling it to perceive and feel. Ponder on the .earlier quoted verses and you will see this reality

The verses imply that man, per se, is not the body; he does not die when the body dies, he does not perish when the body perishes. The body disintegrates, its parts are .scattered, but the "man" continues

Even after the death of his body, he continues to live, either in eternal bliss and everlasting felicity and grace, or in never ending misery and painful chastisement. That bliss or misery is based on his traits, trends, characteristics and actions, which he had acquired and done in this world's life - not in his bodily accomplishments or social .achievements

These themes are understood from the above-mentioned verses. Obviously, these traits are totally different from those of the body, and are diametrically opposed to worldly and material characteristics. Thus, the human soul

.is different from his body

:Also, the verse ۳۹:۴۲ points to this fact

Allah takes completely the souls at the time of their death, and those that die not during their sleep; then He withholds those on whom He has passed the decree of .death and sends the other back till an appointed term

"at-Tawaffiyy" (اَلـتـوَّفـِيّ) "al-istifa 'and (اَلإِصْطِفَآءُ) both have the same meaning - to take and realize one's right fully and completely. The words used here in reference to the soul - "takes", "withholds" and "sends back" - clearly prove that the soul is .something different from the body

:Another verse

And they say: "What! when we have become lost in the earth, shall we then indeed be in a new creation?" Nay! they are disbelievers in the meeting of their Lord. Say: "The angel of death who is given charge of you shall take you completely, then to your Lord .(you shall be brought back" (۳۲:۱۰ - ۱۱

In this verse, Allah mentions one of the misgivings of those who do not believe in the Resurrection; and then tells His Messenger how to clear their doubt. They said: When we die, our body disintegrates, our limbs and organs are destroyed, nothing remains of our original form, and all our parts are scattered here and there in the earth. No one can then perceive us nor can anyone feel us. How is it possible for us, after such a ?total destruction, to be created a second time

This doubt is based

on a feeling of improbability. Allah shows the Messenger (S) how to remove that misgiving: Say: "The angel of death... be brought back."

There is an angel who has been given charge of you; he shall take you completely; he will not let you be lost, as you shall be under his protection, his control; what is lost in the earth is your body, not your soul or person (the reality which is referred to by the word "you"), because the angel of death shall take "you" completely.

One more verse: Allah says, mentioning the creation of man:

Then He made him complete and breathed into him of His spirit... (۳۲:۹).

Read it in conjunction with the verse:

And they ask you about the soul. Say: "The soul is from the command of my Lord" ((۱۷:۸۵).

The soul, therefore, is from the command of Allah, and that command has been explained and defined in these words:

His command, when He intends anything is only that He says to it: "Be", and it is. Therefore, glory be to Him in Whose hand is the kingdom of everything... (۳۶:۸۲ – ۸۳).

The soul is from the kingdom and it is the word, "Be". In another place, the command is further explained in these words:

And Our command is but one, as the twinkling of an eye (۵۴:۵۰).

The phrase, as the twinkling of an eye, shows that the command, that is, the word "Be", is an instantaneous, not a gradual, being. It comes into being at once, and is not bound with

.the chain of time and space

It is thus evident that the command including the soul - is different from body, is something immaterial. We know that the material things come into being gradually and are fettered with time and space. Obviously, the human soul is not a material thing and is different from the body, although it has a special relationship with the .body

:There are some verses which show the nature of that relation-ship. Allah says

;(From it (the earth) We created you... (۲۰:۵۵

;(He created man from dry clay like earthen vessels... (۵۵:۱۴

and He began the creation of man from dust, then He made his progeny from an ... ;(extract of water held in light estimation (۳۲:۷ - ۸

And certainly We created man of an extract of clay, then We made him a small life-germ in a firm resting place, then We made the life-germ a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made (in) the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We caused it to grow into another creation; so blessed be Allah, .(the best of creators (۲۳:۱۲ - ۱۴

The verses show that man, in the beginning was but a material body, changing into various forms; then Allah made that body into another creation - a creation that has got perception and feeling; now he perceives and wills, thinks and acts according to his thoughts and ideas; he manages and manipulates the things around him as he .likes

These activities

and authority are beyond the power of body and matter. Obviously, neither of these .activities emanate from body and matter nor does their doer

We may say that the soul has the same relation to the body - from which it emanates - as a fruit has to its tree, or a lamp flame has to its oil. But these similes are a bit far-fetched. How-ever, these illustrations serve to show the nature of the relation between the soul and the body - how it is attached to the body in the beginning and .how that connection is severed on death

In short, the soul, in the beginning, is the body itself, then it grows into another creation, and lastly it becomes completely independent and separate from the body on death. These facts are understood from the above-mentioned Qur'anic verses; there are many other verses which allude to and imply this reality, and one may find .them on reading the Qur'an with open eyes. And Allah is the Guide

Qur'an: And We will most certainly try you with somewhat of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits: Allah told them to seek assistance through patience and prayer and forbade them to say about those who are slain in His way that they .are dead because those martyrs were in fact alive

Now, He explains why He has informed them of these realities. It is because the believers were soon to be tried and tested by fighting in the way of

.Allah

It was by al-jihad that they would reach the pinnacle of their virtues; their noble lives would not be worth living except with al-jihad. The upright religion could not gain .strength but with fighting

And while engaged in fighting, their efforts would not be crowned with success unless they were helped by those two helpers, that is, patience and prayer, and were further strengthened by a third factor, that is, the belief that their martyr is neither dead nor lost, and that their endeavours with their wealth and souls is neither forfeited nor .fruitless

If they kill their enemy, they will remain alive while their enemy is destroyed; in this way they would be safe from the rule of injustice and false-hood which the enemy wanted to impose on them. And if they are killed in this endeavour, again they will remain alive for ever and equally safe from that unjust and wrong rule. In either case, .they shall enjoy one of the two most excellent things

Generally, the afflictions consist of fear, hunger and loss of properties and lives. As for the loss of fruits, apparently it means loss of children. When fighting occurs, its most telling result is not the loss of fruits but that of progeny, as the men and especially the .youths are killed

Some exegetes have said that the word “fruits” refers to the dates, and the “property” .to other possessions, for example, camels, goats and sheep

Qur’an: and give good news to the patient ones who, when a misfortunate

befalls them, say: “Surely we are Allah's and to Him we shall surely return”. Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord, and those are the followers of :the right course

The patient ones are again mentioned in these verses so that Allah may give them good news to begin with, and then may teach them the way of good patience, and thirdly, may explain to them why patience is essential - it is because Allah owns the man - and fourthly, may declare what is its overall recompense, that is, blessing, .mercy and being guided aright

Allah first told His Prophet to give them good news; but did not disclose what was that good news about. This was to show the greatness of the subject matter - it is from Allah, therefore, it must be about something specially good, great and beautiful. .Moreover, it is something which Allah Himself has guaranteed

Thereafter, He said that the patient ones are those who say these words when translated here as misfortune) is = (اَلْمُصِیْبَه) "misfortune befalls them. “al-Musibah .any happening that occurs to a man; but it is always used for a distressing happening

Who... say: 'Surely we are Allah's...' ”: The word “say” as used here does not mean“ .mere utterance of the sentence with-out keeping its meaning in mind

Even understanding its meaning is not sufficient, unless one penetrates to the depth - of its reality. And that is that man is owned by Allah - in real ownership

.and that he is surely to return to Allah, his Master

If this feeling takes deep root in his heart, the man will observe the highest degree of patience; sorrow, fear and anguish will be totally eradicated, and the rust of ?heedlessness will be removed from the heart. How

Man and all his faculties, actions and other concomitants of existence, are there because of Allah. He is his Creator and Originator. Man exists because of Allah, and is dependent on Him in all his affairs and conditions. He does not have any existence or .continuity independent of Allah

The Master has the right to manage His slave's affairs in any way He likes; the slave has no authority whatsoever in his own affairs, because he has no independence at .all. Allah owns him; He is the real Owner of man's existence, faculties and actions

Then Allah allowed man to ascribe his "self" to himself as a property is ascribed to its owner. That is why it is said that "man has existence". In the same way, He permitted .him to ascribe his faculties and actions to himself

Accordingly, it is said that "man has faculties like hearing and sight", or "he does some actions like: walking, speaking, eating and hearing". With-out the Divine permission neither man nor anything else could "own" any such ascription or attribution, because .nothing exists without the Divine permission, or independent of Allah's will

Allah has also informed us that ultimately all things will revert to their original status - the state

before Allah allowed them to be attributed to one or the other creature – and then no :ownership will remain there except that of Allah, as He says

.(To whom belongs the kingdom this day? To Allah, the One, the Subduer (of all) (۴۰:۱۶

It shows that man – together with all that "belongs" to him or is with him – is to return .to Allah

In short, there is a "real" ownership; it is reserved for Allah, nobody – be he a man or something else – shares it with Him. And there is an "apparent" ownership, for .example, man "owns" his own "self" as well as his children and properties etc

But the real ownership is of Allah, and man owns them in form and appearance only – and that also because Allah has allowed such attribution. Thus, when man rememebers the reality of Divine ownership, and then looks at his own "self", he .knows that he is wholly and totally owned by Allah

Then, he realizes that his "apparent" ownership – of his "self" as well as of his children and properties, etc. – will soon cease to exist, will become null and void; it will return to his Lord. Then, he will understand that ultimately he owns nothing, either in reality or .in appearance

In this back-ground, there is no reason why he should grieve if he is afflicted with some misfortune. One may be affected only by something which one owns – feeling happiness when it is found or sorrow if

.it is lost

But when he believes that he owns nothing, he shall not be affected by finding it or losing it. How can he be afflicted by any loss when he believes that Allah is the real ?Owner of every-thing, and He may manage His property in any way He likes

The Ethics

The ethics entail betterment of morals and psychic traits - both in theory and practice. Man acquires the good morals and removes the evil traits by repeatedly doing good - and relevant - deeds, and their continuous observance. Repeated and continuous .performance of an action etches its particular knowledge on the psyche

Gradually, a picture is engraved on the mind which becomes impossible - or extremely difficult - to erase. Habits become second nature. For example, if a man wants to remove the trait of cowardice and acquire that of bravery, he should .repeatedly plunge himself into difficulties and dangers

When-ever he would rush into a perilous and hazardous situation and finds himself coming out unscathed, he would acquire the taste of boldness and courage; and .would understand the ignominy of flight, of taking to one's heels

Every such bold step would leave its mark on his psyche and ultimately bravery and courage would become an integral part of his character. Man has no power to acquire such traits by his own will; yet it may be counted as within his power inasmuch as its preliminary steps - those repeatedly performed deeds - emanate from his will and .power

There are two universally recognized

.systems to acquire high moral standards and noble manners

First System: Many people base their moral science on good worldly foundations, that is, the knowledge, ideas and ideals which are thought praiseworthy and laudable in the society. They acquire a good trait because it is commendable in the eyes of the .people

Chastity, contentedness with what is in one's hand and not looking at what others have - all these virtues create respect and honour in the people's eyes, and one's .standing is enhanced in public

Avarice results in poverty and privation. Greed destroys one's prestige. Knowledge attracts people and bestows respect and dignity in the eyes of elite; it opens the eyes of the knowledgeable person, and protects him from unpleasant things. Ignorance, on the other hand, is blindness. Knowledge protects you while riches need your .protection

Bravery makes you stead-fast and saves you from fickleness; this in its turn makes people sing your praise - no matter whether you win or lose. Cowardness and rashness both cause opposite effect. Justice gives peace of mind, and keep man alive even after his death inasmuch as his good name continues and his love pulsates in .people's hearts generation after generation

This is the well-known basis on which the moral science is founded. Ancients like .Greek philosophers followed this very system

The Qur'an does not endorse this system, because it depends on the like and the dislike of the public. It looks at what is good in the eyes of the people and what is bad -

and accepts the former and rejects the latter. Even in a few verses where the Qur'an appears to use this method, it really refers to the next world's reward or punishment. -:Ponder, for example, on the following verses

and wherever you are, turn your faces towards it, so that people shall have no … .(argument against you... (۲:۱۵۰

Here Allah exhorts the Muslims to remain steadfast and firm, and for its reason, He ."says: "so that people shall have no argument against you

and do not quarrel, for then you will be weak in hearts and your power will depart, ...(and be patient... (۸:۴۶

Allah tells the believers to be patient, as impatience and quarrelling among .themselves would weaken their hearts, dilute their power and embolden their enemy

And whoever is patient and forgiving, that most surely is an act of great resolution .((۴۲:۴۳

Here Allah invites the believers to patience and forgiveness and explains its reason in .terms of determination and resolution

Second System: The second system is to keep in sight the other worldly goals. Allah :has used it in many verses of the Qur'an

Surely Allah has bought of the believers their persons and their properties for this, (that they shall have the garden... (۹:۱۱۱

(only the patient ones will be paid back their reward in full without measure. (۳۹:۱۰ ...

(surely it is the unjust that shall have a painful punishment. (۱۴:۲۲ ...

Allah is the Guardian of those who believe; He brings them out of the darkness into the light; and (as to) those who

disbelieve, their guardians are the rebels, they take them out of the light into the (darkness... (۲:۲۵۷

.There are many verses, on different subjects, which imply the same theme

,We may add here another set of the verses. For example

No misfortune befalls on the earth nor in your own souls, but it is in a book before We .(bring it into existence; surely that is easy to Allah (۵۷:۲۲

This verse exhorts man not to feel any sorrow (or joy) on whatever misfortune (or good thing) comes to him; what has come to him, could not be averted, and what-ever has been lost could not be obtained, because all happenings occur by a firm .Divine Decree which is unavoidable

Sorrow and joy both seem, in this background, meaningless - a believer should not indulge in these vain practices because he believes in Allah and knows that all affairs :are in His hands. Allah says

No affliction comes about but by Allah's permission; and whoever believes in Allah, He .(guides aright his heart (۶۴:۱۱

Such verses, like the earlier quoted ones, create high morals by pointing to the sublime goals of the next world. These other worldly goals are real, not imaginary, perfections. T

hese verses reform the human character by fixing man's attention to the real already existing causes like the Divine measure and decree, adoptation of the Divine characteristics and remembrance of the good names of Allah and His sublime .attributes

Question: Belief in causality of such things as the Divine measure and decree negates the rules

governing this life in which we have been given freedom of will and power. This, in its turn, nullifies the noble morals and disturbs the system of this physical world.

If man may rely, in acquiring such good traits as patience and steadfastness, and in refraining from sorrow and joy, on the fact that all things to happen are already firmly decreed and written in the "preserved tablet", then the same argument may be used if one does not endeavour to earn one's livelihood, to acquire good characteristics, or to refrain from bad habits.

He will sit idle not caring to do any work, and not striving to defend the truth and right. His only reply to all exhortations will be that whatever was happening was already written and decreed. In this way he will neglect acquiring noble characteristics and discarding evil traits. It will be a negation of every perfection.

Reply: What we have written on the subject of "Decree", is sufficient to clear this misunderstanding. We have explained there that man's actions are integral parts of the causes of the events and effects. Effects cannot happen without their causes.

It would be a manifest error to say: Satiation of hunger is either decreed to happen or decreed not to happen; and in either case, it is useless to eat. We know that satiation of hunger cannot occur unless one takes one's food - and eating is an action with-in one's power, and is a part of the causes of satiation. It is

foolishness to expect an effect to appear when one has neglected or negated all or .part of its causes

It is wrong for a man to neglect and negate the principles of "free will and power", which is the king-pin of this worldly life, and to which are attributed its felicity and infelicity. It is a part of the causes of the events which happen to a man through his actions (or through the conditions and traits resulting from his actions). He cannot say that his will and power are not a part of the causes of events happening to him, or that .they have no effect on those happenings

In the same way, it is wrong to claim that his power is the complete, or the only, cause of the events and that nothing else has any influence on those events. One should not forget that there are countless things happening in the world which have influence on one's circumstances, conditions and the related events, and that the Divine Will is the .foremost among them

If one were to forget this reality, one would be entrapped in many evil traits, like: .conceit, pride, miserliness, joy, sorrow and grief, etc

The ignorant man says: "I did this; I left that." Thus, he falls victim of conceit, shows arrogance to others or does not spend his money on necessary things. He is heedless to the fact that there are thousands and thousands of other causes - apart from his imperfect "power" - absence of any

one of which would nullify the effects of his “power”. He says: “Had I done this, I would have avoided this loss; had I done so, I would have gained that.”

He does not realize that prevention of loss or death depends on thousands and thousands of causes, and even if one of them is absent, the dreaded loss or death is bound to occur, man's own power notwithstanding. Moreover, man's power itself depends on numerous causes which are beyond his power. In short, man's power is not by his power.

The above explanation is a Qur'anic reality, and, as mentioned earlier, it is derived from the Divine teachings. When you know this fact and ponder on the relevant verses, you will see that the Qur'an attributes only some of the good characteristics to the firm decree and the preserved tablet, while it does not attribute other traits to the above-mentioned Divine Decree.

There are some actions, conditions and traits which, if attributed to the Divine Decree and Measure, would nullify the principle of free will; and accordingly the Qur'an never attributes them to the Divine Decree; rather, it refutes it with full force. For example:

And when they commit an indecency they say: “We found our fathers doing this, and Allah has enjoined it on us.” Say: “Surely, Allah does not enjoin indecency; do you say against Allah what you do not know?” (۷:۲۸)

On the other hand there are some actions, etc. which, if not attributed to the Divine Decree, would imply that

man had complete freedom, that his will and power were the sufficient cause of his .actions, etc. and were independent of every outside cause

The Qur'an, therefore, pointedly ascribes them to the Divine Decree, and thus guides the man to the straight path - a path which does not confuse the walker. In this way, the Qur'an removes from him the base characteristics which would have resulted .from that wrong ideas

For example, it attributes the happenings to the Divine Decree, in order that man :should not ignorantly feel joy for what he gets or sorrow for what he loses. Allah says

;(and give them of the wealth of Allah which He has given you (۲۴:۳۳

note that Allah exhorts man to be generous, by reminding him that his wealth has .come to him from Allah

:Also, He says

;(and spend (benevolently) out of what We have given them (۲:۳ ...

the verse calls him to spend by attributing the wealth to the sustenance given by :Allah. Again, He says

Then may be you kill yourself with grief, sorrowing after them, if they do not believe in this announcement. Surely, We have made whatever is on the earth an embellishment for it, so that We may try them (as to) which of them is best in deed .((۱۸:۶-۷

In these verses Allah tells His Prophet not to grieve because of the unbelievers' disbelief, reminding him that their disbelief does not mean that they have overpowered Allah; the fact is that what-ever is on the earth has been made and

.put there by Allah for the purpose of test and trial

This system of ethics is the one used by the prophets, and a lot of its examples may .be found in the Holy Qur'an and other Divine Books

There is a third system, which is found exclusively in the Qur'an; it is neither seen in the Divine Books which have been transmitted to us, nor in the teachings of the previous prophets (peace of Allah be on them!); nor is it seen in the knowledge which .has come to us from divine scholars

In this system, man is trained in character and knowledge, and the knowledge is used in a way that does not leave room for base and low traits. In other words, this system removes the vile characteristics, not by repulsing them, but by eliminating all motives .other than Allah

Let us explain it in this way: What is the motive of a work done for other than Allah? It may be honour and might of the 'other than Allah', which the doer of that work longs :for. Or his power which he is afraid of. But Allah says

;(Surely might is wholly Allah's (۱۰:۶۵

.(that the power is wholly Allah's (۲:۱۶۵

And when one is imbued with this true knowledge, there will remain no question of doing any deed for letting others see, or hear about it; nor will there be any reason .why he should fear, or look forward to, or rely on anyone other than Allah

Once these two realities are firmly

known to a man, his psyche will be cleansed from evils of theory and practice. It will rather be adorned by the positive traits, that is, good character and Divine characteristics; for example, fear of and reliance on Allah, strength, self-respect, self-sufficiency and other such virtues.

The Qur'an has repeatedly said that the kingdom belongs to Allah, that the kingdom of the heavens and the earth is His, that to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth, as we have explained several times.

Evidently, this kingdom does not leave any independence to anything, nor does it allow the creatures any freedom from want - except through Allah. Look at anything; you will see that Allah is the Owner of its person and of all its concomitants.

When a man believes in that owner-ship and this belief becomes firmly-rooted in his heart, he does not admit that anything has got any independence at all - in its person, characteristics or activities. Such a man cannot look except at the face of Allah, nor can he bow down before, hope for, or have fear of, anything other than Allah. He will not enjoy or be pleased with any other thing, nor will he rely on, or surrender to, anyone but Allah.

In short, he will not desire or wish for anything except Allah - the Eternal One Who will remain when everything will perish; he will surely turn away from all the false-hood, that is, from everything other than Allah; he will

not attach any importance to his own existence nor will he care for himself in face of the Absolute Truth, that is, the eternal existence of his Creator - Great is His Glory. :The same is the import of the following verses

;(Allah is He besides Whom there is no god; His are the very best names (۲۰:۸

;(That is Allah, your Lord, there is no god but He; the Creator of all things (۶:۱۰۲

;(Who made good everything that He has created (۳۲:۷ ...

;(And the faces shall be humbled before the Living, the Self-subsistent God (۲۰:۱۱۱

;(all are obedient to Him (۲:۱۱۶ ...

;(And your Lord has commanded that you shall not worship (any) but Him (۱۷:۲۳

;(is it not sufficient as regards your Lord that He is a witness over all things? (۴۱:۵۳ ...

;(now surely He encompasses all things (۴۱:۵۴ ...

.(And that to your Lord is the end goal (۵۳:۴۲

And the same is the import of the verses under discussion, that is, "and give good news to the patient ones, who when a misfortune befalls them, say: 'Surely we are Allah's and to Him we shall return.' Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy ".from their Lord, and those are the followers of the right course

These and similar other verses contain a unique Divine Know-ledge, and produce some real and especial results. Their system is not like any other which a moralist .might employ, nor even like that used by previous prophets in their teachings

According to the moralists, virtue and evil

are based on the public's likes and dislikes; and the prophets based their teachings on the general religious beliefs concerning the rules of the shari'ah and their recompense. But this third system is based on pure and perfect monotheism and it has been used exclusively by Islam – the best of blessings be on its Prophet and his !progeny

A western orientalist has expressed a really strange and astonishing idea in his History where he discusses the Islamic civilization. A gist of his observation is as :follows

A scholar should concern himself only with various aspects of civilization which were" developed by Islam among its followers, and the excellence and superiority which .were its legacy to the Muslims in the form of a developed society and high culture

As for the religious precepts which Islam teaches, they are merely the moral teachings which are common to all religions and which were popularized by all the ".prophets

Comment: The explanation given by us shows how unfounded his opinion is and how confused his views are. The result emerges from its premises; the effects of training .emanate from the knowledge acquired by the trainee

As mentioned earlier, there are three types of the teachers of ethics: one invites to a reality of a low grade, another to an average perfection and the third to the pristine .reality and highest perfection

Can it be said that the results of all three will be the same? In other words, the ;scholars of ethics call the people to the sociological truth

the prophets call mankind to the actual truth and real perfection by which it may get the eternal bliss in the life hereafter; but the Islam invites the people to the Absolute Reality, that is, Allah Himself, and teaches them ethical values by reminding them that

Allah is One, and there is no partner in His divinity; this belief produces in man the .purest servitude

Now you see how dissimilar are the systems employed by the three groups, and how .different are the results

This Islamic system created an admirable social structure, and produced a multitude of good servants, divine scholars and Allah's friends - men and women alike. And this .single factor is sufficient to ensure the distinguished position of Islam

Moreover, this stystem sometimes differ from the other two in its result also. It is based on the love a servant has for his Lord;.it teaches him to give preference to his Lord's wishes over his own. We know that love and enthralment sometimes lure the lover to do things which are not approved by social wisdom (which is the basis of the social ethics), nor are they commended by common sense on which is founded the general religious commandments. Reason has its own rules and love its own. We shall .further explain it in some other place, Allah willing

Qur'an: Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord, and those are the followers of the right course. It appears from meditation on these words that blessings is to

a certain extent different from mercy - look how “blessings” has been used in plural :and “mercy” in singular. Allah says

He it is Who sends His blessings on you, and (so do) His angels, that He may bring you .(forth out of utter darkness into the light; and He is Merciful to the believers (۳۳:۴۳

The context shows that the sentence, “and He is Merciful to the believers”, gives the reason of the preceding phrases, “He it is Who sends His blessings on you.” The meaning therefore, is as follows: Allah sends His blessings on you; and it is as it should be, because He is Merciful to the believers, and you are believers; therefore, He .sends His blessings on you, to show His mercy to you

The position of blessing vis-à-vis mercy is like that of a premise in relation to its result, or of a glance in comparison to seeing, or of throwing into fire vis-à-vis burning. It is in the = اَلصَّلٰوةُ) conformity with the explanation, given by some writers of as-salah .blessing), that it really means turning towards, inclination

Blessing from Allah means that He turns towards the servant with mercy; when attributed to angels it connotes their turning towards a man and becoming a medium to convey Allah's mercy to him; and when ascribed to man, it means turning to the Lord calling Him with humility. However, it does not mean that blessing itself is not .mercy or an example of mercy

Pondering on the usage of

mercy" in the Qur'an, we find that it is the comprehensive gift of Allah, the All-" :encompassing Divine Bounty. Allah says

;(and My mercy encompasses all things (۷:۱۵۶

:also, He says

And your Lord is the self-sufficient one, the Lord of mercy; if He pleases, He may take you off, and make whom He pleases successors after you, even as He raised you up .(from the seed of another people (۶:۱۳۳

He may take you off because He is Self-sufficient, He does not need you; and He may make others succeed you, as He had raised you up, because He is Merciful. Even then both aspects are attributed to His mercy, and at the same time they may be attributed to His Self-sufficiency. Every creation - be it from matter or without matter .- is a mercy, and also a gift and bounty emanating from His Self-sufficiency

:Allah says

.(and the bounty of your Lord is not confined (۱۷:۲۰

And one of His bounties is as-salah (the blessing); this too is a mercy, but of a especial type. Probably this is the reason why in the verse under discussion, "blessings" has .been used in plural and "mercy" in singular

Qur'an: and they are the followers of the right course. It looks like the result of the preceding clause, "Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord". That is why Allah did not say, 'on whom are blessing and mercy from their Lord and .guidance'; instead He described it in a separate sentence

Also, He did not

the rightly guided ones)'; instead their = (اَلمَهْـدِیّـُونَ say, 'and they are al-mahdiyyun = (اَلمُهْـتـَدُونَ acceptance of guidance has been denoted with the word al-muhtadun followers of the right course), because "following" describes the next stage, coming ."after and resulting from "guidance

Evidently, the mercy of Allah consisted of guiding them to Himself; the blessings were like the preliminaries of that guidance, and their following that right course was the result of that guidance. Thus, the blessings, the mercy and the following of the right course, all are different from one another, although looking from another angle all .three were but Divine Mercy

Allah gives good news to these believers of His bestowal of honours to them. To clearly understand the whole sequence, look at the following example: You see in the way a friend of yours who wants to come to your house to be your guest, and is .making enquiries as to how to reach your home

You meet him with smiling face, take him to the proper path, walking with him, not leaving him alone lest he loses the way; this continues until you bring him to your house; while on the way, you tend to his needs and look after his meals and transport, .and protect him from every hardship and trouble

All these things taken together are called "hospitality" accorded to him; and every care taken of him is a particular care and hospitality; for example, showing him the - way is separate from hospitality and care

and even then it is a hospitality. Each of the above acts is a care, and each is a guidance and each is a particular hospitality – and all together come under one word, .”“hospitality

Applying this example to this verse, the one comprehensive hospitality is like the mercy, and every attention paid to the friend is like the blessings and his being your .”guest in your house is like the “following the right course

Many syntactical devices of this sentence point to the prestige and rank of those believers: First, it is a nominal clause; second, it begins with a demonstrative pronoun used for distant objects; third, that pronoun has been reinforced with a separate .personal pronoun; and fourth, the predicate begins with the definite article

Traditions

About al–Barzakh and the Soul's Life after Death

Suwayd ibn Ghaflah narrates from the Commander of the faithfuls ('Ali, a.s.) that he said: “Surely, when the son of Adam comes to (his) last day of this world and the first of the next, his property, his children and his actions are portrayed before him. So he :turns to his property and says

By God! I was covetous of you (and) avaricious; so what have you (now) got for me?'' (The property) says: 'Take your shroud from me'. Then he turns to his children and says: 'By God! Surely I was your loving (father), and I was your protector; now what have you got for me?' They say: 'We shall convey you to your pit (i.e., grave) and bury '.you in it

Then he turns to

his deeds and says: 'By God! I was indifferent to you, and you were distasteful to me; (now) what is with you (for me)?' So it says: 'I am your companion in your grave as well '.as on the Day of your gathering - until I am presented with you before your Lord

Then (after his death), if he is a friend of Allah, there comes to him (a visitor), the most sweet-scented of all people, of the most beautiful appearance and (wearing) the most adorned apparel, and says to him: 'Rejoice with refreshment from Allah, and flowers .(and the garden of bounties; you arrived a good arrival' (i.e., welcome to you

Thereupon, he says: 'Who are you?' (The visitor) says: 'I am your good deed. Proceed from the world to the garden.' And he recognizes the one who washes his body, and .(earnestly appeals to his carrier (the bier-bearer) to hasten him (to the grave

Then when he enters his grave, two angels come to him - and they are the examiners of the grave - with elegantly-dressed hairs, writing on the earth with their teeth; their .voices are like roaring thunder and their eyes like streaking lightening

They ask him: 'Who is your Lord? And who is your prophet? And what is your religion?' And he says: 'Allah is my Lord; and Muhammad is my prophet; and Islam is my '.religion

So they say: 'May Allah confirm you in what you like and are pleased with!' And this is (the meaning of) the

:word of Allah

Allah confirms those who believe with the sure word in this world's life and in the .(hereafter... (۱۴:۲۷

Then they make his grave spacious for him as far as his eye can see, and open for him a gate to the garden, and say to him: 'Sleep happily the sleep of a fine-looking youth.' :And it is the word of Allah

The dwellers of the garden shall on that day be in a better abiding place and a better .(resting place. (۲۵:۲۴

And if he is an enemy of his Lord, then comes to him a (visitor), the ugliest of the" creatures of Allah in attires and the foulest-smelling. And he tells him: 'Welcome to the '.entertainment of boiling water and roasting in Hell

And he (the dead person) recognizes the one who washes his body, and earnestly appeals to his carrier (the bier-bearer) to hold him back. And when he is buried in his .grave, the examiners of the grave come to him and remove his shroud from him

Then they ask him: 'Who is your Lord? And what is your religion? And who is your prophet? And he says: 'I do not know.' So they say to him: 'You did not know, nor were '.you on the right path

Then they hit him with an iron-rod, a hitting which frightens every creature of Allah - except the jinn and the men. Thereafter they open for him a door to the Hell and tell '.him: 'Sleep in the worst condition

So he is squeezed

in a narrow space like a shaft in an arrow-head, until his brain comes out from between his nails and flesh; and Allah sets on him the serpents of the earth and its scorpions and insects which go on biting him until Allah will raise him from his grave - and he will long for the advent of the Hour, because of the trouble in which he finds (himself." (at-Tafsir, al-Qummi

Abu Bakr al-Hadrami narrates from Abu Ja'far (a.s.) that he said: "No one shall be questioned in the grave except he who shall be of pure belief or of total disbelief." I told him: "And (what about) the rest of the men?" He said: "They will be kept in (oblivion." (Muntakhab Basa'iri 'd-darajat

Ibn Zubyan says: "I was with Abu 'Abdillah (a.s.), and he said: 'What do the people say about the souls of the believers after they die?' I said: 'They say (that the souls are placed) in the craws of green birds.' He said: 'Glory be to Allah! The believer is far more !honourable near Allah than this

When it happens (i.e., when the believer dies) there come to him the Messenger of Allah and Ali and Fatimah and Hasan and Husayn (peace be on them), and with them .((come) the angels of the Mighty and Glorious Allah (who are near to him

So, if Allah lets his tongue speak the witness of His Oneness and the prophethood of love, obedience of = (اَلوِلاَيَه) the Prophet and the (al-walayah

the Ahlu 'l-bayt, then the Messenger of Allah (S) and 'Ali and Fatimah and Hasan and Husayn (peace be on them) and with them the near angels become his witnesses for .it

And if his tongue is tied, Allah confers on His Prophet the knowledge of what is in his (i.e., that believer's) heart of that (belief); so he (i.e., the Prophet) becomes his witness; and then bear testimony of Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husayn - because of the testimony of the Prophet - on their group be the best peace from Allah! and (so do) .those angels who are present with them

When Allah takes him to Himself, He sends that soul to the garden, in a shape similar to his (worldly) shape. They eat (there) and drink. When a new-corner comes to them, he recognizes them by that shape which they had in the world." (al-Amali, ash-Shaykh (at-Tusi

Hammad ibn 'Uthman narrates from Abu 'Abdillah (a.s.) that he described the souls of the believers and said: "They meet each other." I said: "They meet each other?" He said: "Yes! They ask each other and recognize each other, so that if you see one you (will say, '(He is) so-and-so'." (al-Mahasin

Abu 'Abdillah (a.s.) said: "Verily, the believer visits his family and he sees what he likes; and what he dislikes is hidden from him. And verily the unbeliever visits his family and he sees what he dislikes; and what he likes is hidden from him." And he said: "There are some of

them who visit (their families) every Friday; and there are others who visit according (to their deeds." (al-Kafi

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "Verily, the souls are, with the characteristic features of (their) bodies, in a tree of the garden; they know each other and enquire about each other. When a (new) soul comes to (those) souls, they say: 'Let it be, because it is coming '.(from a great terrifying (experience

Thereafter, they ask him: 'What has happened to so-and-so? What has so-and-so done?' If the soul tells them, 'I have left him alive', they hope for his (future arrival); and if it tells them, 'He had died', they say: 'He fell down (to Hell); he perished.' " (al-(Kafi

The author says: There are numerous traditions on the subject of al-barzakh. We have quoted above some comprehensive ones. There is a huge lot of nearly mutawatir traditions describing the above-mentioned meanings. These traditions .prove that the life of al-barzakh is an immaterial one

A Philosophical Discussion on Immateriality of the Soul

point

Is the soul immaterial? The word "soul" in this discussion means that thing which every man refers to when he says "I". Its "immateriality" refers to the fact that it is not .a material thing, it is neither divisible nor governed by time or space

No doubt, I conceive in myself a concept which I refer to as "I"; and it is equally certain that every man has similar conception about himself. It is a conception which we are never oblivious of - as long As we are alive and conscious. It

is not a limb of ours; nor is it a part of our body which we perceive by one of our .senses or even through reason

In short, it is not like our external limbs which we feel with our senses of sight or touch, etc., nor is it like our internal organs which we know by senses or experiment. Sometimes we become oblivious of one or another of those limbs or organs - or even of the whole body. But we are never oblivious of the “I”. It proves that the “I” is other .than the body and its parts

One thing more. Body and its limbs and parts as well as the faculties and characteristics found in it, are all material. One of the characteristics of matter is gradual change, dissolution and divisibility. If soul were body or a part thereof, it .would have been material and subject to change and division - but it is not so

If a man looks at this vision of his “self ” and then compares it with that which he used to look at since the beginning of his gnosis of the “self ”, he will find that it is the same .vision, the same notion, without the least change or plurality

It is unlike his body or its parts and characteristics which all undergo continuous change, in substance and form as well as in their conditions and positions. Also, he will realize that it is a notion, simple, indivisible and non-compound, unlike the body

.or its parts and characteristics

And matter and every material thing is a compound and divisible. Obviously, the soul is not body, nor is it a part of the body; it is neither a development of the body nor one of .its characteristics

Coming to matter again, it makes no difference whether we perceived it with a sense of ours or by reasoning, or did not perceive it at all - it is matter and material in any case. And matter is subject to change and divisibility. But we have seen that the vision which we call "soul" is not subject to any of the above characteristics of matter. .Therefore, soul is neither matter nor material

Also, this vision of "I" is a notion, simple and one; there is no plurality of parts therein, nor is there any extraneous item mixed with it; it is an absolute one. Every man finds it .in him-self that he is he and not someone else

Therefore, this vision is a concept subsistent by itself, and distinct; it is beyond the definition of matter and is not subject to its characteristics and properties. It is a al-lit. "jewel"; technically, a thing that exists in reality and which is the = (اَلجَوْهَرُ jawhar bearer of the accidents), separate from matter; it has a connection with the body .which makes it identifiable with the body - and it is the connection of management

.The above discourse proves our claims in this respect

All the materialists and a group of Muslim theologians

as well as the Zahiristic traditionalists do not accept the immateriality of the soul. But what they have written in support of their view stretches the credulity too far. Let us :have a look at the arguments of the materialists. They say

The science has nowadays advanced to a previously-undreamt-of extent in its in- .١ depth and minute researches of natural phenomena. It has found and pin-pointed a .natural and material cause for every characteristic of the body

It has not found any psychological effect which could not be explained according to the material laws. This being the case, why should we believe in the existence of an ?immaterial soul

The nervous system continuously conveys the perceptions to its centre (i.e., brain) .٢ with extreme rapidity. The vision thus perceived is a unified series, having a single position. The pictures formed in mind are substituted with such rapidity that one frame is not distinguishable from another; that is, mind does not realize that the .preceding frame has gone and been replaced by another

It is this composite "one", this illusory "unit", which we see and call our soul, and which ."we refer to as "I

It is true that it is other than all our limbs and organs; but it does not necessarily mean that it is other than body and its characteristics. The fact is that it is a composite series which appears to be one, because of continuous and rapid substitutions - and we are never oblivious of it, because such an oblivion would

.result in nullity of the nervous system – in other words, death

Also, it is true that my vision of my "I" is constant. But it is not because there is a thing which is constant and unchanged. In fact, it is only an illusion resulting from a series of .constantly and rapidly changing visions

Suppose there is a water-tank with an inlet and an outlet of the same diameter; water comes in from one side and goes out from the other, with exactly the same speed – .and the tank seems always full

Our sense perceives the water as one, constant and unchanged unit, but in reality it is neither the same water nor is it constant and unchanged. Even if there is a reflection in the water, of a man, tree or some other object, it will look as unchanged, steady and constant, but actually it is not so – it is not one, it is gradually changing with the .gradual change of the water

The same is the case of the apparent oneness, constancy and unchangeability which ."we see in our soul, self or "I

.٣ The soul, for whose immateriality arguments have been offered, based on the inner vision, is in fact a composite of natural faculties and characteristics. It is the sum-total of nervous perceptions, which in their turn emanate from mutual action and reaction between external matter and nervous system. It is a composite unity, not the real .one

Comment

.١ It is true that the science, based on senses and

experiments, with all its minute, delicate and in-depth researches, has not come across a "soul". Also, it is correct that it has not found any phenomenon which irresistibly led one to the soul as its cause.

But these two premises do not prove that there is not an immaterial soul - after all, we have written earlier the proofs of its existence. The natural sciences, which discuss the laws of nature and the properties of matter, are by definition limited to the researches concerning matter only, which is its subject.

The apparatus and chemicals, etc. which sciences use to conduct and complete their tests and experiments, may throw light on matter and material affairs only. But by the same token these, sciences and their apparatus, etc. cannot pass any judgment - for or against - on metaphysical and immaterial concept and beings.

Utmost that a natural science can say is that it did not find a soul. But "not finding" is not "non-existence". The natural sciences, by their definition, are not expected to find within their subject (i.e., within matter and its properties and characteristics) something beyond the limit of matter and physical nature.

In fact, their above-mentioned assertion emanates from a gross misunderstanding. They think that those who believed in the existence of soul, did so because they look at some biological functions of their limbs which they could not explain within the framework of their incomplete knowledge, and so they said that there was something immaterial, that is, the soul, that was

.the source of those functions

But now the science has developed by leaps and bounds and has pin-pointed the natural causes of all such functions. Therefore, there is no need now to believe in the putative soul. (It is the same trend of thought which they have followed while denying (.the existence of the Creator

Obviously, it is a wrong assumption. Those who believe in the existence of soul, do not do so because of that supposed difficulty; they do not ascribe some bodily function (of known causes) to the body, and some others (of unknown causes) to the soul. Rather, they ascribe all bodily functions to the body - directly - and to the soul - indirectly, through the body. They ascribe to the soul only one function which cannot be ascribed ."to the body in any way - man's gnosis of self and his vision of his person or "I

They have said that the reality seen by man as one is, in fact, a series of nervous .۲ perceptions coming to the central nervous system one after another with extreme .rapidity but their oneness is only composite

But this assertion is quite irrelevant, and it has nothing to do with the vision of the self. We have argued on the strength of the vision of the self; they are talking about arrival of the sensual visions from the peripheral sense-organs to the central nervous .system, and its results

Well, let us suppose, as they say, that actually there are many things, that

is, perceptions which have no real oneness; and those perceptions are all material, there is nothing behind them except their own reality; and that the vision which is 'one .soul' is in fact the sum-total of these numerous perceptions

If so, then where did this "one" come from - the one which is our only vision, whose "other" has never been perceived by us? Where did this perceived oneness come ?from

The talk about "composite oneness" is more like a jest than a serious proposition. A "composite one" is in reality a collection of numerous things without any oneness at all. Its oneness is imaginary, as we may say one house or one line, which is not one in .fact

What they say amounts to this: The perceptions and sensations which are pluralistic .and manifold in themselves are one perceptions in itself

It means that these perceptions are numerous in reality, having no oneness at all, and at the same time they are actually only one perception; there is nothing beyond these sensual perceptions to perceive them as one perception - unlike a sense or imagination which consecutively and collectively receives manifold sensory or .imaginary perceptions, and perceives them as one

They claim that those manifold perceptions are in themselves one perception - there .is no other faculty beyond them which treats this collective vision as a composite one

Also, it is not possible to say that that perceiving is done by a part of brain which perceives the pluralistic picture as "one" - because it

will not remove our objection: The perception of that part of brain is itself a part of those consecutively and rapidly-perceived picture, and our objection covers that .perception too

That part of brain does not possess a separate perception-power which would deal with these perceptions - as an external sense deals with the external matters and (.acquires through them sensory pictures. (Ponder on this point

Exactly the same arguments (as we have offered above against "oneness" of the sensual perceptions) apply with equal force against firmness and indivisibility of this .vision which is always changing and divisible by its very nature

Apart from that, the premises - that these manifold, consequently (and with extreme rapidity) perceived pictures are perceived by mental vision as one - is wrong in itself. ?What is brain or its faculties? What is perception and the perceived picture

All these things are material - and matter and material are in their quiddity manifold, changeable and divisible. But the gnosis of "self" is not subject to these material defects. Is it not strange that even then they claim that there is nothing beyond ?matter and material

۳. They have said that the senses or the perceiving faculties become confused and consequently perceive manifold, divisible and changing things as one indivisible and .unchanging thing. But this assertion is manifestly wrong

Error or confusion is a relative - and not an absolute - effect which occurs when one thing is compared with another. For example, we perceive the celestial bodies as .small bright dots

,Of course

this perception is wrong as we know from academic proofs and our other perceptions. But this error is found out when we compare our sensory perception with the reality .of these perceived luminous bodies

As far as that sensory perception itself is concerned, it is a reality - we are actually perceiving small bright dots. And to that extent there is no question of any error or .confusion

The subject under discussion is not different from the above-given example. When our senses and faculties look at numerous divisible and changing things and perceive them as one indivisible and unchanging thing, their confusion and error is found out .only when that picture is compared with the real thing existing outside

But so far as the perceived picture found in that faculty or sense is concerned, it is undoubtedly one, unchanging and in-divisible - and such a thing cannot be material .because it lacks the properties of matter and material

In short, the above discourse shows that the argument offered by materialists on the basis of senses and experiment, only proves that they could not find the soul. The .'fallacy is that they have proved 'not finding' and think that it proves 'non-existence

Also, the picture painted by them to illustrate the vision of self or soul - the vision that is a single, simple and unchangeable reality - is irrelevant and wrong; that picture is in .accord neither with established principles of materialism nor with the actual fact

Now, we should have a look at the definition

of soul or psyche as given by the psychologists. According to them, it is the unified condition resulting from the actions and reactions of various psychological activities - like perception, will, pleasure, love, etc. - which give rise to that unified condition.

We have no-thing to say about this definition, because scholars of every branch of knowledge have right to postulate a subject for their scholarly pursuit and deliberation. And so have the psychologists.

Our concern is about the existence (or inexistence) of the soul in reality, quite independent of the assumptions of the thinkers. And it is a question within the domain of philosophy, not psychology.

There are some scholars of theology who believe that the soul is not immortal. They say: It has been established by the disciplines related to human life, like anatomy and physiology, that man's spiritual and biological characteristics emanate from live cells; those cells are the foundations of human and animal lives. Spirit or soul, therefore, is a characteristics and especial effect of those countless cells - each of which contains a life of its own.

What the man calls his soul - and to which he refers as "I" - is a composite entity made up of countless souls. We know that these life conditions and spiritual characteristics cease to exist when the life-giving germs and cells die.

In this back-ground, there is no question of a single immaterial soul or spirit which is supposed to continue even after the body dies. True that the principles of materialism,

.established after scientific researches, are yet unable to unravel the mysteries of life

There-fore, we may say that the physical causes are unable to create the soul, and accordingly, it may have been brought into being by a metaphysical being. The attempt to prove the immateriality of the soul by purely rationalistic argument is unacceptable in the world of modern knowledge, which does not rely on anything .other than the senses and experiments

The author says: On meditation you will see that all the objections written against the materialists' arguments apply with equal force to this argument too. The following :two objections are over and above that

First: If the scientific research is uptil now unable to unravel the mysteries of soul and realities of life, it does not necessarily mean that it cannot do so even in future; nor that these spiritual characteristics are in fact not based on material causes - although we may not know it. Therefore, the theologians' argument is no-thing but a fallacy by .which they have equalized inexistence of knowledge with knowledge of inexistence

Second: They seem to ascribe some worldly affairs - that is, the physical phenomena - to matter, and some others - that is, spiritual affairs - to a metaphysical cause, that is, the Creator. But it implies that there are two creators in the world. It is a proposition which is neither acceptable to the materialists nor the theists. And all the arguments .of monotheism rebut such assumption

There are some other objections against immateriality

of soul, described in books of philosophy and theology; all of them show that the writers concerned have not pondered on the proof given by us, nor have they understood its main theme. That is why we have refrained from quoting and commenting on them here. Anyone desirous to know them should look into the books .concerned. And Allah is the Guide

A Discourse on Ethics

point

Ethics is the science which looks into human traits, related to man's vegetable, animal and human characteristics, and differentiates the good traits from the bad ones, in order that man may complete his practical happiness by acquiring the good traits; and thus emanate from him such actions as attract to him general praise from the human .society

Ethics shows that human morality finally belongs to three comprehensive faculties of man. These faculties lead the psyche to acquire practical knowledge, from which .emanate all actions of the human species

These are the desire, anger and rational faculty. Human actions are divided into three categories: Either they are intended to gain some benefit, for example: eating, .drinking and wearing clothes, etc

They issue forth from the faculty of desire; or they are aimed at protecting, or repulsing harmful effects from, one's person, honour or property, etc. These actions emanate from the faculty of anger. Or they are related to mental conception and .proposition, for example, arranging syllogism, preparation of argument, etc

Such mental activities are caused by rational faculty. Man's personality is composed of these three faculties, and they, by joining together, emerge as a

composite unit and become the source of all human activities and actions. In this way, .man attains his felicity and happiness, which is the final cause of this composition

It is therefore necessary for man not to let any of these three faculties deviate from the middle path to either the right or the left, not to allow any of these to exceed the limit or to be deficient - as it would disturb the ratio of that particular ingredient, which would result in changing the entire nature of the composite unit, that is, man himself. This would negate the reason for which the man was created, that is, the felicity of .the whole species

The middle course for any of the faculties is to use it as it should be - both in quantity and quality. The middle course for the faculty of desire is called continence, and its .two sides of excess and deficiency are greed and undue quiescence, respectively

The middle course for the faculty of anger is bravery, and the two sides are rashness and cowardice. The middle course of the faculty of rationality is called wisdom, and .the two sides are deception and dull-mindedness

When the three good characteristics - continence, bravery and wisdom - combine in a man, a fourth characteristic is born, just as a new quality emerges when different ingredients of a medicine or mixture are blended together. And that quality is called justice. Justice gives each faculty its due right and puts it in its

.proper place

.Its two undesirable sides are inflicting injustice and surrendering to it

These four - continence, bravery, wisdom and justice - are the roots of all virtuous characteristics, of good morality. Each of them has numerous branches which issue forth from it and belong to it. They have the same relationship with the above-mentioned roots as a species has with its genus.

Examples of these branches are generosity and magnanimity, contentedness and gratitude, patience and gallantry, courage and modesty, sense of honour and sincerity, nobility and humility, and so on. These are the branches of virtuous characteristics, which are given in detail in the books of the Ethics. The following is a 'family-tree' showing its roots and branches(١).

And the Ethics defines each of them and distinguishes the middle course from its two sides of excess and deficiency; then it explains why a virtue is virtue, then shows how it can be acquired, until it becomes a firm trait, that is, by firm belief that it is good and virtuous trait and by repeatedly practising it until it becomes a firmly-rooted characteristic of the soul.

For example: We say to a coward: Cowardice is born when the psyche is gripped by fear; and fear emanates from something which may happen or may not happen - in future; and such a thing, whose existence and inexistence both are equally possible, cannot be tipped to either side without a cause; a man of reason should not indulge in such fantasies; therefore, a man should not allow

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١- since the author has described the branches of virtuous characteristics in the text in tree form, and in the explanatory figure (of the original work) he has also chosen the tree form representation, we therefore have duplicated the explanatory figure in the same manner (pub.)

.himself to be gripped by fear

When a man teaches himself this theoretical aspect, and then repeatedly enters into dangerous situations and resolutely proceeds towards alarming perils, he soon gets .rid of the bad trait of fear. The same is the case with all the virtues and evils

The above description is based on the first system, as was explained in the Commentary. That system tries to reform the character and to create a balance, a moderation, in moral traits, in order that the man may be praised and his virtues .lauded by the society

Somewhat similar is the approach of the second system brought by the prophets and the divine legislators. The only difference is in the aims and objects of the two .systems

While the first system aims at acquiring a perfect trait because it is approved by the society and attracts praise from the people, the second one aims at achieving by it the genuine happiness for the man, that is, perfection of belief in Allah and His signs, and the felicity of the next world, which is the real happiness and perfection. Yet, both systems are similar in that, the ultimate goal of both is the perfection of man in his .character and morals

As for the third system (which was explained earlier), it differs from the above two, in that it aims at seeking the pleasure of Allah, not at achieving human perfection. Consequently, its goals sometimes differ from that of the earlier two systems. It is quite possible that

what appears as the middle way from this point of view, may not look so from the .other two angles

When the faith of a servant proceeds on this path of perfection, when it goes on from strength to strength, his soul is attracted towards meditation about his Lord; he keeps the beautiful Divine Names before his vision, and constantly looks at His lovely attributes which are free from every defect and deficiency; his soul is relentlessly attracted to Allah going higher and higher in his meditation, until there comes a stage where he worships Allah as though he (man) were looking at Allah, and Allah were looking towards him. At this stage he feels the Divine Presence in his attraction, .meditation and love

The love increases from strength to strength, because man by nature loves beauty. :Allah has said

.(and those who believe are stronger in (their) love for Allah (۲:۱۶۵

Such a man begins following the Messenger of Allah in all his doings, in every situation, because love of a thing results in the love of its signs, and the Messenger of Allah (S) is the wonderful sign of Allah. (In fact, the whole universe is a sign and token (.of Allah

This love becomes stronger and stronger until a time comes when the servant cuts himself from every thing, in devotion of Allah; he loves nothing except his Lord, he bows before none other than Allah. Whenever such a man looks at a thing which has some beauty and attraction, he finds

.in it a sample – although imperfect – of the Divine Beauty

He knows that it is but a reflection of the inexhaustible perfection, the unending beauty and incomprehensible splendour of Allah. Allah's is the beauty, grace, perfection and magnificence; every beauty and perfection found in other things, in reality belongs to Him, because every thing is a sign of Allah – it is its only reality, it is nothing more than that; it has no other disposition; it is but a reflection showing the .image of the original

This man is, and remains, overwhelmed by love; and he does not look at anything but only because it is a sign of his Lord. In short, all strings connecting his heart to other things are snipped off, leaving it attached only to the love of Allah. Whatever he loves, .it is only for the sake of Allah and in the cause of Allah

At this stage, the mode of his perceptions and actions under-goes a drastic change. When he looks at a thing, he sees Allah before it and with it, every thing loses its independence and identity in his eyes. What he sees and perceives is different from what other people see and perceive; the people look at things from be-hind a curtain, .while he sees them in their true form

This shows the difference in perception, and similar is the case of actions. As he does not love anything except Allah, he does not want any-thing except for Allah, seeking His Sublime

.Majesty

He neither seeks nor intends, neither hopes no fears, neither chooses nor abandons, becomes neither despaired nor depressed, is neither pleased nor displeased – except for Allah and in the cause of Allah. Thus, his aims and goals differ totally from those of .other people; his motive is diametrically opposed to that of his fellow beings

Previously, he acquired a virtue because it was a human perfection, and discarded an evil because it was a defect. But now his only interest is in seeking the Sublime Majesty of Allah; he does not care about any perfection or defect, nor is he attracted to any worldly praise or cherished remembrance; he rises above this world as well as the next; he takes into consideration neither the Paradise nor the Hell – he discards every thing and rises above them. Now, his destination is his Lord; his provision, his :humility of servitude; and his guide, his love. As a poet has said

,Love narrated to me the traditions of amour

Through its chain of narrators, from neighbourhood

,of a distinguished personality

,And narrated to me the breath of fresh breeze

From the branching trees, from the valley of euphorbia

,from the heights of Najd

,From the tear, from my sour eye, from passion

,From sorrow, from my wounded heart, from ecstasy of love

,That my ardor and love have sworn together

.To my destruction till I am laid down in my grave

This discourse, although short and concise, explains our theme (if you study it carefully). It shows that in this third system of

the Ethics the question of human perfection or defect becomes irrelevant; and the .aim is changed from human perfection to the Sublime Majesty of Allah

As a result, the outlook is changed from those of the other two systems; and it may happen sometimes that what is counted as a virtue in other systems becomes evil in .this one, and vice versa

Now, we should turn our attention to one remaining topic. There is another theory of Ethics which differs from the above-mentioned three systems; and probably it may .be counted as a separate system

They say: Ethics and morality changes in its roots and shoots with the changes occurring in the society, because virtue and vice change with the changing society, they are not based on any permanent, unalterable, firm foundation. Allegedly it .emanates from the theory of evolution of matter

They say: Human society has come into being because of various needs and requirements of life, which man wants to fulfil through the agency of society. He tries to keep the society alive which, he thinks, preserves his own existence. The nature is .governed by the law of evolution and gradual perfection

Consequently, society too undergoes constant changes and proceeds to a more perfect and more developed goal. If an action conforms with the aim of society - that .is, perfection - it is called virtue; otherwise, it is vice

Therefore, virtue and vice cannot remain unchanged, they are not static or permanent. There is nothing like absolute virtue or absolute vice; they are

relative ideas, which change with the changing societies, according to regions and .times

As the virtue and vice - being relative factors - under-go changes, so do the ethical and moral values. In other words, Ethics is not absolute; its views on good and bad .characteristics are liable to change with circumstances

From the above, we may infer that Ethics follows the nation-al or social aspirations - the aspirations which are a means of achieving the social perfection (which is the goal .of the society); and virtue and vice are governed by it

Whatever promotes development, whatever helps the society in reaching its goal and achieving its aspiration, is good and virtue; and whatever hinders from that goal, .whatever keeps the society backward, is evil and vice

Accordingly, lie, false allegation, indecency, hard-heartedness, robbery and shamelessness may become good and virtuous, if they promote the aspiration of the society. And truth, chastity and mercy may become bad and evil - if they hinder it from .achieving its goal

This is a gist of this strange theory which has been adopted by the materialist communists. This theory is not a new one, contrary to their claims. In ancient Greece, .the Cynics reportedly had the same idea

Likewise, Mazdakites (the followers of Mazdak, who lived in Iran during the reign of Kisra and was the first to call to communism) were practising it; and even today some .primitive tribes in Africa and elsewhere follow this tenet

However, it is a false theory, and the proof offered in its support

is wrong both in its foundation and structure. Before exposing its falsehood, a few :points should be made clear

Every being – that which has external existence – has an inseparable personality of its own. Consequently, one being cannot be another being. For example, existence of Zayd has a personality and a sort of unity which prevents it from becoming the .personality of 'Amr

Zayd is one person and 'Amr is another; they are two persons, two human beings, not .one. It is a premise whose truth cannot be doubted

There is a totally different proposition which says: "The physical universe is a being) having one individual reality." This proposition should not be confused with the above-(.mentioned premise

It follows that the external existence is one and the same with personality.' But mental ideas are different from external beings and their existence is not their personality. Reason admits that an idea – whatever it may be – may be applied to more than one individual, for example, the idea of man, or that of a tall man, or that of .the man standing before us

The logicians divide idea into general and particular. Also, they divide the particular into two categories of relative and real. But these divisions are done when an idea is seen vis-à-vis another idea, when it is put at the side of the other; or when it is seen in .relation to external existence

This property of the ideas – their applicability to more than one individual – is also sometimes called

."generality"; its opposite being "individuality" or "unity"

An external physical being is governed by the law of change and general movement. Therefore, it has an expanse and that expanse is divisible into boundaries and pieces, .each piece being different from other preceding or following ones

Yet, it is connected with them in its existence. Otherwise, without that connection, it could not be said to be changing or evolving. (If a thing is removed completely and is replaced by an entirely new thing, it cannot be said that the first evolved and changed into the second. If one thing is to change into another, there must be a common factor (.joining them together

It follows that that movement is a single thing having its own identity and personality. It looks numerous when it is seen in relation to the boundaries of a thing (as mentioned above). That relation distinguishes one piece from the others. But as for .the movement itself, it is a single uninterrupted flow

This characteristic of the movement - this constant flow - is also called a "generality" in contrast to the relations it has with each boundary; we say "general movement", .meaning a movement free of its relations with the boundaries and pieces

This "generality" is a thing existing in reality, unlike the "generality of the ideas" mentioned in (۲) above, which is mental attribute of idea - an imaginary attribute of an .imaginary being

Undoubtedly, man is a physical being; humanity has many members, as well as its .own laws and characteristics

What is created by nature is one individual, singly and separately. It does not create the collection of people which we call human society. Of course, the nature was aware that man needs somethings to perfect his existence which he could not obtain on his .own

Therefore, the nature equipped him with organs, faculties and powers which would be useful in his endeavours to make up his deficiencies within the framework of society. Obviously, the single man is the goal of creation, primarily and principally, .while society is a secondary goal, just a by-product

The human nature demands a society and proceeds towards it, (if we can use the words of demand, causality and movement - in their real sense - about the society!). ?What is the real relation between man and this society

An individual man is a single and personal being (in the sense we have described above). At the same time, he is constantly on move, changing, evolving, proceeding to .his perfection

That is why every piece of his changing being is different from other pieces. Yet his is a nature, flowing, "general", preserved in all the stages of the changes; in short, his .nature is a single personality

This nature found in this individual man is preserved by the means of procreation, by branching out of one individual into other individuals. It is this factor which is called ."nature of the species"

It is preserved through the individuals, even if they are changed, even if they undergo creation and destruction (in the

same way as was explained about the individual's nature). Individual's nature exists .and proceeds towards personal perfection

Likewise, nature of species exists and proceeds towards the perfection of the species. There is no doubt that this endeavour for perfection of species exists in the natural .system

That is what we mean when we say, for example, that the human species proceeds towards perfection; or that today's man is a more perfect being than the primitive man. The same demand for perfection of species is in the minds of those scientists .who speak about the evolution of species

Had there not been a nature of species, existing in reality, preserved in the individuals. (or in species), such talks would not have had any value - it would have been just a .metaphorical speech.As with the individuals, so with the society

There is an individual, or let us say particular, society, which is found amongst the people of a nation, of a time or of a region. Also, there is a general society found in the human species, continuing with its continuation, evolving with its evolution (if it be correct that society, like a social man, is an externally existing condition of an .(!externally existing nature

Society moves and evolves with the movements and changes of man. This society is a single entity from the initial stage of the movement to wherever it proceeds to, with a general existence. This "one" (which changes because of its relation with each and every boundary) becomes divided into numerous pieces. And

."every "piece" is a part of the society, that is, a "man

The parts or members of the society rely in their being on the persons of mankind. In the same way the general civilization – in the sense described above – depends on the general human nature. The law governing a unit is a unit of the law; and the law governing a "general" is the general rule. ("General rule" does not mean an abstract (."rule, because we are not talking about "general ideas

Undoubtedly an individual man, being a single entity, is governed by a rule, which continues with his continuation. Yet that rule undergoes partial changes, following the changes occurring in the man himself. For example, there is the rule that the physical .man takes food, acts by his will, has feelings and imagination, thinks and perceives

These rules exist and continue as long as the man himself exists. Of course, minor changes may occur in those general rules consequent to the changes occurring in the man. The same principle applies to the humanity in general, the general mankind, .which exists with the existence of its individuals

As establishment of society is a law of human nature and one of its characteristics, so the general society is a characteristic of the general human species. (By general society we mean the society, per se, the society established by human nature and (.which is continuing uninterruptedly from the day man came into being to this time

This general society exists and continues with the

humanity. And the laws of society which it has brought into being will remain intact as long as the general society exists. Of course, some minor changes may occur in it but the main principles will remain unchanged, like the mankind itself, which continues .although its individual members go on changing

Now it is clear that there are some ethical principles which are unchangeable and are valid for ever - like general virtue and vice - as the general society is firm, constant .and unalterable from the beginning

Society cannot turn into non-society (i.e., individuality) - although a particular civilization may give way to another particular civilization. Likewise, general virtue (and vice) cannot turn into non-virtue (or non-vice) - although a particular virtue may .evolve into some other particular virtue

An individual man needs - for his existence and continuation - some perfections and benefits which he must achieve and acquire for his own self. That is why nature has equipped him with organs and faculties to help him in this compulsory quest, for example, alimentary canal for food intake and digestion, and sexual organs for reproduction and continuation of the species. It is obligatory for man to use these .systems for the purpose they have been created for

He should not completely ignore them by leaving them unused, because it would be against the dictate of nature. Likewise, he should not over-indulge in these activities, he should not eat or cohabit more than necessary; for example, he should not go on eating

until he becomes sick, or dies, or becomes unable to use his other faculties. He must .keep to the middle course in achieving all his requirements, perfections and benefits

This middle course is called continence; and its two undesirable sides are greed and undue quiescence. Likewise, we see that every individual, in his existence and continuation, is faced with many such things which are harmful to him and which he is obliged to resist, and repulse from him-self. And this "obligation" is proved by the fact .that nature has equipped him with the organs and powers to defend himself with

Therefore, it is obligatory for him to defend himself and resist the harmful things - keeping himself on the middle course. He should not neglect and crush these powers nor should he overuse them. This middle course is called bravery, and the other two .sides are rashness and cowardice

The same is the case with wisdom and its two sides, deception and dull-mindedness; .as well as with justice and its two sides, injustice and surrender to injustice

These are, thus, the four faculties and virtues which are demanded by the nature of an individual man - the nature which is equipped with its necessary tools: continence, bravery, wisdom and justice. And all of them are good and virtues. Good is that which is in conformity with the ultimate goal of a thing and promotes its perfection and felicity; and, as explained above, all the four are in conformity with the felicity of the .individual

.And their eight opposites are bad and evil

When an individual, by his nature and in himself, has this attribute, then he would be having it also within the framework of the society. Society, being a product of nature, cannot negate nature's rules; otherwise, it would be a contradiction in terms. After all, what is society if not the co-operation of the individuals to facilitate the perfection of .their natures and achievement of their aspirations

Human species in framework of the "general" society has the same characteristics as .an individual has in his particular society, as mentioned above

Human species in its civilization tries to achieve its perfection by repulsing what is harmful and acquiring what is beneficial to it; by learning as much as is good for it and practising justice - that is, giving everyone his due right, without indulging into .injustice and without surrendering to injustice

And all these four characteristics are virtues. The civilization, per se, decrees that they .are absolute virtues and their opposites are absolute vices

The above discourse clearly shows that in the constant and perpetual human society, there are absolute virtues and absolute vices - society cannot "be" without them. It also shows that the four fundamental ethical values are absolutely good and virtuous and their opposites absolutely bad and evils; as has been decreed by the social nature .of humanity. And the case of their branches is not different from that of the roots

They too are absolute and unchanging - although there may occur some differences

.sometimes in their applications, as we shall mention afterwards

:Now it is clear that what they have said concerning relativity in morality is not correct

They said: "Absolute virtue and vice do not exist. What exists is the relative virtue and ".relative vice; and it is a changing thing which varies with regions, times and societies

Reply: It is a fallacy, because they have confused the "generality of idea" with "generality (i.e., continuation) of existence". It is true that absolute good and vice – in .the meaning of general ideas – do not have external (i.e., real) existence

But here we are not concerned with them. What we are concerned with are absolute virtue and vice – in the meaning of lasting social factors which continue as long as the .society exists, by decree of nature

The aim of the society is the happiness of the species. And it is impossible to think that all happenings and possible events and actions would always be good for the society. .Surely some would conform with its needs and some would not

Accordingly there would always be good and evil in the society. How can we suppose existence of a society – of any type – in which the members do not believe that every one should be given his due right, or that it is necessary to gain benefit to its proper limit, or that they must protect and defend the cause of the society as and when needed, or that the knowledge – by which man differentiates

?what is beneficial from what is harmful – is a good attribute

These four beliefs are the above-mentioned justice, continence, bravery and wisdom. As was said, every society, of any description whatsoever, decrees that these four characteristics are good and virtuous. Moreover, how can we think of a society that does not ordain that one must refrain from indecencies? And that feeling is modesty, .a branch of continence

Or a society that does not exhort one to be enraged when rights are usurped or the sanctity of sacred things violated? And it is the earnest sense of honour which is a branch of bravery. Or that one should be happy with his due social rights? And it is .contentedness

Or that one should preserve one's social status without snubbing other people, without putting them out of countenance by one's arrogance? And it is modesty and humility. We may go on enumerating in the same way each and every branch of the .ethics and morality

They say: "The views often differ from society to society on what virtue is. One thing is ".considered as virtue in one society, while another society treats it as vice

Reply: Of course, there are some minor examples of this phenomenon. But it is not because one society believed in acquiring good traits while the other dismissed it as unnecessary. Whatever the difference, it only occurs because one society believes that trait to be good, while the other thinks it is evil. So the difference is not about the principle, it

.is only in its application

For example: The societies ruled by autocratic rulers used to believe that the sovereign had total authority over his subjects, and absolute power to do whatever he wished and order whatever he liked. But that belief was not based on any negative .attitude towards justice

It actually emanated from their belief that that absolute power was the due right of the ruler; they thought that what the ruler was doing was not injustice, he was only .exercising his due authority and taking his just right

Likewise, some societies thought that it was a shame if their kings studied to acquire knowledge, as is reported about French kings of the medieval ages. But it was not because they looked down at the virtue of knowledge; it was only because they thought that acquiring knowledge of politics and studying the ways of managing various government departments would conflict with the king's rightful royal activities .and engagements

In the same way, some societies do not acknowledge any excellence in chastity of women (i.e., not establishing sexual relation with any man other than their husbands), and their modesty. Nor do they believe that their men should feel enraged if their women indulged in licentiousness. The same is the case with some other virtues like .contentedness and humbleness etc

But it is only because those societies do not think that these things fall under continence, modesty, self-respect, contentedness and humbleness. It is not that they ,do not accept these main virtues as virtues. After all

.they praise a judge or a ruler if he practices continence in his rule and judgment

They appreciate it if one is ashamed of breaking a law; they laud a man who, overcome by national zeal, defends the nation's independence, the cause of civilization, or the sanctity of other sacred values. They praise a man who remains content with what the law has allotted to him; and applaud the loyalty and obedience .shown by the public to their leaders and rulers

They say: "Whether a characteristic is good depends on its conformity with the goals of social aspirations." Then they come to the conclusion that the said characteristic's excellence depends on its conformity with the society's goals. But it is a clear fallacy. Society is an institution which comes into being when its members enforce, and act .upon, all the laws decreed by nature

This society is bound to take them to their happiness and felicity (provided there is no disturbance in its arrangement and flow); and the society is bound to have some rules and regulations like virtue and vice, good and evil. On the other hand "society's aspiration" is just a set of some imaginary ideas, invented for creating a society on .prescribed lines by imposing it on its members

In other words, society and society's aspirations are two completely different things: Society is an established fact, society's aspiration is only a potential which is yet to come into being; the former is an actual fact while the latter is only a

.plan yet to be implemented

How could one be equated with the other? The virtue and vice are brought into being by the general society on the demands of the human nature; how could such an actual fact be brought under the domain of some aspirations - the aspirations which ?are nothing but some imaginary notions

Question: The general civilization, brought into being by nature, has no authority of its own; whatever authority there is, it belongs to its goals and aspirations - especially if .it is a theory conforming to the happiness of the society's individuals

Reply: The preceding discussion about virtue and vice and good and evil, shall be repeated in this case again - until the talk stops at a permanent, perpetual and .unchanging decree of nature

Apart from that, there is another difficulty. Let us suppose that virtue and vice as well as all the rules of civilization depend on the goals and aspirations of the society. And it .is those aspirations on which the arguments of these people are based

But it is possible - nay a fact - that there may be different conflicting goals and aspirations within one society, or between different societies. Which aspiration would ?then prevail? Which one the people should give preference to

Which would be acceptable to the general society? The fact is that in this situation there will only be one criterion, and that is the power and domination; in other words, might is right. How can it be believed that the human nature

led the human beings to a social structure whose parts are in conflict with one another? Can the society be governed by a rule which would negate the society itself? Is it not an ignominious contradiction in the rule of nature and the demands of its ?existence

A Few Traditions on some Related Topics

Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) said: “A man came to the Messenger of Allah (S) and said: 'I am keen (and) enthusiastic for jihad.' (The Messenger of Allah) said: 'Then do jihad in the way of Allah, because if you are killed, you shall remain alive near Allah and sustained, '...if you die (before that), then your reward is indeed with Allah

:The author says: The Prophet's words, “and if you die...”, point to the word of Allah

and whoever goes forth from his house emigrating to Allah and His Messenger, and .(then death overtakes him, his reward is indeed with Allah... (۴:۱۰۰

.It also shows that proceeding to jihad is emigration to Allah and His Messenger

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) said about the prophet Isma'i۱, whom Allah has named “Truthful in promise”: “He was named 'Truthful in promise' because he had promised a man (to .wait for him) in a place

So he remained waiting for that man for one year. There-fore, Allah named him 'True of promise'. Then that man came to him after that (long) time and Isma'il said to him, ('I have been waiting for you...' ” (al-Kafi

The author says: It is a thing which average wisdom would probably say was a deviation from middle course, while

Allah has counted it as an excellent virtue of the said prophet, increasing thereby his :prestige and raising his status, as He has said

And mention Isma'il in the Book, surely he was truthful in (his) promise, and he was a messenger, a prophet. And he enjoined on his family prayer and alms-giving, and was .(one in whom his Lord was well pleased (۱۹:۵۴-۵

The fact is that the criterion by which this action was judged is different from the one used by common wisdom. The average wisdom, the common sense, looks at the things according to its own views, and Allah looks after His friends by His Own help and support; and the word of Allah is the High. Many similar events have been .narrated about the Prophet, the Imams and other friends of Allah

Question: How can rules of the shari'ah go against the dictates of reason, in situations ?where reason may have a say

Reply: True that reason may judge the virtue or vice of an action wherever it is possible for it to do so. But that thing or action should first come within its jurisdiction .before it can pronounce its judgment on it

And we have explained earlier that such actions (as described in the above tradition) are governed by the third system, and that system takes such actions out of the jurisdiction of human intellect and reason - reason does not have any say against or .about them. It is the way of the Divine Knowledge

Apparently the prophet Isma'il

a.s.) had given that man unconditional promise by saying, 'I shall wait for you here) until you come back to me.' Therefore, he stuck to that unconditional wording, to save himself from breaking the promise, and to fulfil what Allah had put in his mind and .made his tongue utter

Of the same import is an event related about the Prophet that he was near the Sacred Mosque when one of his companions told him that he would come back to him, and .the Prophet promised to wait for him until he would return

That man went away and did not return, and the Prophet remained there three days waiting for him in the same place which he had promised. That man passed by that place after three days and found the Prophet sitting there waiting for him and he .himself had forgotten the promise

As-Sayyid ar-Radi has narrated from the Leader of the faithfuls ('Ali - a.s.) that he heard someone saying: "Surely we are Allah's and to Him shall we surely return." Thereupon, he ('Ali - a.s.) said: "O man! Verily our word, Surely we are Allah's, is acknowledgment by us that we belong to Him, and, to Him shall we surely return, is (acknowledgment by us that we are to die." (al-Khasa'is

The author says: Its meaning is clear in the light of the earlier given explanation. The .tradition has been narrated in detail in al-Kafi

Ishaq ibn 'Ammar and 'Abdullah ibn Sinan have narrated from as-Sadiq (a.s.) that he :said

The Messenger of Allah (s.a. w.a.) has said: 'Allah, the Mighty, the Great, has said: “I“ have given the world as loan to My servants. T

hen whoever gives Me a loan from it, I give him ten times to seven-hundred times in lieu of one. And whoever does not give Me a loan and I take something from him by force, then I give him three things that if I gave one of them to My angels they would :be pleased of Me.” ' ” Then Abu 'Abdillah said: ”(It is) the words of Allah

Who, when a misfortune befalls them, say: 'Surely we are Allah's and to Him we shall surely return.' Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord, and ”.those are the followers of the right course

Then Abu 'Abdillah (a.s.) said: “It is for the man from whom Allah takes something (forcibly.” (al-Kafi

The author says: This tradition is narrated by other chains, all having nearly the same .theme

from Allah is mercy, and from the angels (اَلصَّلٰوةُ) Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: ”as-Salah (is purification, and from the people is prayer.” (Ma'ani '۱-akhbar

.The author says: There are other traditions of the same meaning

At first glance, there appears to be a conflict between this and the preceding tradition. This tradition explains as-salah as mercy, while the preceding one counts as-salah as other than mercy; and this view is further strengthened by the wording of the verse itself which mentions as-salah and mercy separately, “blessings and

mercy from Allah". But in fact there is no contradiction as we have explained in detail .in the Commentary

Suratul Baqarah: Verse ۱۵۸

point

(۱۵۸) إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِن شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ حَجَّ الْبَيْتَ أَوِ اعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَن يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا وَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَاكِرٌ عَلِيمٌ

Surely the Safa and the Marwah are among the signs of Allah; so whoever makes a pilgrimage to the House or per-forms 'umrah thereof, there is no blame on him to go round them both; and whoever on his own accord does good, then surely Allah is .(Grateful, All-knowing (۱۵۸

General Comment

The Safa and the Marwah are two places in Mecca between which a pilgrim has to perform as-sa'y اَلسَّعْيُ) = the ceremony of walking quickly seven times between the .(Safa and the Marwah, during the hajj and the 'umrah; literally to move quickly, to run

These are two hills, the distance between them reportedly being ۷۶۰½ arm. as-Safa الصَّفَا (= hard stone). ash-Sha'a'ir = اَلْمَرْوَه) hard smooth rock); al-Marwah is (اَلشَّعَائِرُ) the plural of ash-sha'irah اَلشَّعِيرَةُ) = sign); from it is derived the word al-mash'ar المَشْعَرُ) the hajj station, east of Mecca); also they say, ash'ara '۱-hady أَشْعَرَ الهَدْىَ) = he marked .(or branded the sacrifical animal

Al-Hajj (الحَجُّ) literally means repeated intention; in Islamic terminology it refers to the special rites collectively known as Pilgrimage of Mecca. al-I'timar (اَلإِعْتِمَارُ) means to visit; it is derived from al- 'imarah العِمَارَةُ) = building) because buildings thrive

by visits; in Islamic language it refers to the so-called “lesser pilgrimage” to the Ka'bah, which unlike the hajj, need not be performed at a particular time and whose .performance involves fewer ceremonies

is deviation from truth and justice; it is used for sin and (الجُنَـــــاحُ) al-Junah) misdemeanour; thus, negation of sin or blame implies permission. at-Tatawwuf .that is, to make the rounds ,(اَلطـوْفُ) is derived from at-tawf (اَلتـطـوّفُ

It denotes a round trip, that is, a journey or walk that ends at its starting point; it need not necessarily be a circumambulation around something (although circumambulation is more obvious application of the word); it is the former meaning in which it has been used in this verse - it refers to as-sa'y, that is, walking between the Safa and the .Marwah seven times consecutively

to do a walk willingly and gladly). = (اَلطَّوْعُ 'is derived from at-taw (اَلتّطـوّعُ)'At-Tatawwu and say that (اَلإطـاَعهُ) Some people differentiate between at-tatawwu' and al-ita'ah .the former, unlike the latter, is exclusively used for voluntarily done good deeds

If correct, this assertion might be based on the view that the obligatory deeds - because of their obligatoriness - are probably not done willingly, unlike the voluntary .and recommended actions which are done willingly by one's own accord

اَلكـُرْهُ is opposite of al-kurh (اَلطَّوْعُ)'But it is a far-fetched interpretation. In fact, at-taw :dislike), and is not irreconcilable with obligatory deeds. Allah says = (

so He said ...

.(to it (i.e., the heaven) and to the earth: “Come both, willingly or unwillingly” (۴۱:۱۱

is to take to oneself, (اَلتّفَعُّلُ) The characteristic meaning of the paradigm at-tafa''ul he = (تَعَلَّمَ he took on distin-guishing), ta'allama = (تَمَیَّزَ for example, tamayyaza means, he took on doing good (تَطَوَّعَ) took on learning); in the same way tatawwa'a .willingly

In short, at-tatawwu' is not reserved, from the linguistic point of view, for voluntary, .non-obligatory good deed - unless credit is given to the usage of the common people

Commentary

Qur’an: Surely the Safa and the Marwah are among the signs of Allah… to go round them both: The two hills are marked by the signs of Allah; they lead accordingly to Him .and remind one of Him

They have been especially counted “among the signs of Allah” to the exclusion of other things; it shows that the word, “the signs” has not been used here in the sense .in which every created thing is a sign of the Creator

They are the Divine Signs because Allah has made them so, by appointing them as the places of His worship; thus they remind one of Allah, the Creator. They are the signs .for which Allah has prescribed especial rites of worship

Then comes the next sentence: “so whoever makes a pilgrimage to the House or performs 'umrah thereof, there is no blame on him to go round them both. The word “so” in the beginning shows that it is an offshoot of the preceding

.sentence

Its import is to show that walking quickly between these two hills is a part of the .Islamic shari'ah - it does not imply that the said walking is voluntary or non-obligatory

If Allah had wanted to declare its voluntariness, it would have been more appropriate to praise and extol as-sa'y, rather than saying that there was no blame in it. The gist of the meaning is that - because the Safa and the Marwah were among the places of .the worship of Allah - it would do you no harm to worship Him therein

And it is the language of legislation. If Allah had wanted to show only its desirability, He would have said that, because the two hills were among the signs of Allah, He likes .you to go round them

Frequently, when the Qur'an wants to ordain an obligatory law, it uses such expressions which by themselves do not show obligatoriness. For example, Allah says ;regarding jihad

;(that is better for you (۶۱:۱۱

:regarding fast

,(and that you fast is better for you (۲:۱۸۴

:and regarding shortening of prayer

And when you journey in the earth, there is no blame on you if you shorten the prayer .((۴:۱۰۱

Qur'an: and whoever on his own accord does good, then surely Allah is Grateful, All-knowing: The conjunctive "and" may be joining this sentence to any of the three ...:phrases in the preceding one

It may connect it with "so whoever makes a pilgrimage... ". In that case it would show a more general reason for the legislation of the

walking between the two hills, after giving the particular reason, that is, "Surely the Safa and the Marwah are among the signs of Allah".

According to this interpretation, "doing good on one's own accord" would mean "obedience" in general term, and not a voluntary deed.

It may be starting a new sentence, joining it to the words in the beginning of the verse. In that case, "doing good on one's own accord" would refer to the "going round the two hills". Thus it would show only the desirability of as-sa'y (walking quickly seven times between Safa and the Marwah).

Alternatively, the phrase "doing good on one's own according" may be referring to the hajj and the 'umrah, and the phrase would show the desirability of these two rites of worship.

Ash-Shakir (اَلشّاكِرُ = Grateful) and al-'Alim (اَلعَلِيْمُ = All-knowing) are two of the beautiful names of Allah. ash-Shukr (اَلشُّكْرُ = gratefulness, thankfulness). When a beneficiary returns the benevolence of the benefactor by announcing it in words and/ or deeds, it is called gratefulness.

Someone gives you a property, and in return you praise him mentioning his benevolence, or use that property in a way he likes - and thus you show your gratefulness to him.

Now, Allah is the Beneficent; His beneficence is eternal and all beneficence begins from Him; none can oblige Him in any way so that He would be grateful to that person. Yet, He, in His benevolence, looks at His creatures' good deeds as though the creatures have been

beneficent to Him by doing those deeds (although, in reality the case is diametrically different; the creatures' good deeds are actually His benefaction to them).

And thus he repays those good deeds with gratefulness and benevolence, which in fact is a double benevolence. Allah says:

Is the reward of goodness aught but goodness? (۵۵:۶۰);

Surely this is a reward for you, and your striving shall be recompensed (۷۶:۲۲).

Thus, the name "Grateful" is used for Allah in its real, not allegorical sense.

Traditions

One of our companions has narrated this tradition from as-Sadiq (a.s.). He says: "I asked him about walking between the Safa and the Marwah whether it was obligatory or voluntary. He said: 'Obligatory.' I said: 'Does not Allah say: so whoever makes a pilgrimage to the House or performs 'umrah thereof, there is no blame on him to go round them both?'

He said: 'It was in the 'umrah of Qada'(۱); that is, the Messenger of Allah (S) had stipulated with them (i.e., the pagans of Mecca) that they would remove the idols (for the period of 'umrah); and one of his companions was engaged otherwise until the idols were returned (to their places): (The Imam) said:

'Then Allah revealed: Surely the Safa and the Marwah are among the signs of Allah; so whoever makes a pilgrimage to the House or performs 'umrah thereof, there is no blame on him to go round them both, i.e., even when there were idols on them.' " (al-'Ayyashi)

The author says: A nearly similar tradition is found in al-Kafi.

as-Sadiq

١– (tr. In the ٧th year of hijrah.)

a.s.) says describing the hajj of the Prophet: “After circumambulating around the) House and praying its two rak'ahs, (the Prophet) recited: Surely the Safa and the (:Marwah are among the signs of Allah. (Then he said

So I shall begin with that which Allah, the Mighty, the Great, has begun with (i.e., from' the Safa).' And verily the Muslims used to think that walking between the Said and the :Marwah was something invented by the polytheists; so Allah revealed

Surely the Safa and the Marwah are among the signs of Allah; so whoever makes a pilgrimage or performs 'umrah thereof, there is no blame on him to go round them (both.” (al-Kafi

The author says: Obviously, there is no contradiction between the two traditions regarding the reason of the revelation of the verse. The words of the Prophet, “I shall begin with that which Allah, the Mighty, the Great, has begun with”, show the basis of .legislation

We have narrated, in the story of Hajar and her running seven times between the .Safa and the Marwah, that the ritual of as-sa'y started from that

Amir ash-Sha'bi said: “There was an idol, called Asaf, on the Safa, and another, called' Na'ilah, on the Marwah. The people of (the days of) ignorance, after circumambulating .the House, used to walk between the two (hills) and touch and wipe the two idols

When the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) arrived at Mecca, they (i.e., the Muslims) said: 'O Messenger of Allah! (As for) the Safa and the

Marwah, surely the walking around them was done because of the two idols, and '.(walking around them is not among the signs (of Allah

Then Allah revealed: Surely the Safa and the Marwah… Thus, He (especially) mentioned the Safa because of the idol that was on it, and affirmed the Marwah (because of the idol that rose from it." (ad-Durru '۱-manthur

The author says: Both sects have narrated numerous traditions having the above-mentioned themes. Their impli-cation is that the verse was revealed in the year when the Mus-lims performed the hajj, while the Chapter of the Cow is the first one re… .vealed at Medina

It may therefore be inferred that the verses are unconnected with the preceding verses (of the qiblah) which were revealed, as described earlier, in the second year of hijrah; nor are they related to the verses in the beginning of the chapter which were revealed in the first year of hijrah. It shows that the verses were revealed in various .contexts, not in one

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۱۵۹ – ۱۶۲

point

(۱۵۹) إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يَكتُمُونَ مَآ أَنزَلنَا مِنَ ٱلبَيِّنَـٰتِ وَٱلهُدَىٰ مِنۢ بَعدِ مَا بَيَّنَّـٰهُ لِلنَّاسِ فِى ٱلكِتَـٰبِ ۙ أُوْلَـٰٓئِكَ يَلعَنُهُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَيَلعَنُهُمُ ٱللَّـٰعِنُونَ

(۱۶۰) إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ تَابُواْ وَأَصلَحُواْ وَبَيَّنُواْ فَأُوْلَـٰٓئِكَ أَتُوبُ عَلَيهِمۚ ۚ وَأَنَا ٱلتَّوَّابُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ

(۱۶۱) إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ وَمَاتُواْ وَهُمۡ كُفَّارٌ أُوْلَـٰٓئِكَ عَلَيهِمۡ لَعنَةُ ٱللَّهِ وَٱلمَلَـٰٓئِكَةِ وَٱلنَّاسِ أَجمَعِينَ

(۱۶۲) خَـٰلِدِينَ فِيهَا ۖ لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنهُمُ ٱلعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمۡ يُنظَرُونَ

Surely those who conceal the clear proofs and the guidance that We revealed after We made it clear for men in the Book, these it is whom Allah does curse, and

,(those who curse do curse them (too) (۱۵۹

Except those who repent and amend and make manifest (the truth), these it is to .(whom I turn (mercifully), and I am the Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful (۱۶۰

Surely those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers, these it is on whom is ;(the curse of Allah and the angels and men all (۱۶۱

Abiding in it; their chastisement shall not be lightened nor shall they be given respite .((۱۶۲

Commentary

Qur’an: Surely those who conceal the clear proofs and the guidance that We revealed: Obviously “the guidance” means that knowledge and shari'ah which the Divine Religion contains, and which lead the followers to the eternal bliss; and “the clear proofs” means the verses, signs and the arguments which are the clear evidence, .proofs and attestations for the truth - the truth that is guidance

The clear proofs”, as used in the Divine Speech, is a special description for the“ .revealed verses

Therefore, concealing the clear proofs may mean hiding the verses themselves from the people; or concealing their true meaning through misinterpretation and misapplication - as the leaders of the Jews did with the verses prophesying the advent of the Prophet. What the people did not know, they concealed; and what they .knew, they misinterpreted and diverted it from the Prophet

Qur’an: after We made it clear for men: It shows that they concealed the truth after Allah made it clear for all the mankind, not only for the Jews. It is not feasible, in the prevalent

world system, to explain a thing to each and every person individually – not only in revelation but in every general announcement.

As a general rule, only a few persons are informed of the matter directly, and it is through them that the rest of the people get the information; he who is present conveys the message to the absent persons; the learned one explains it to the ignorant. The knowledgeable man is counted as one of the links to convey the message, like the tongue and speech.

When a learned man, bound by the pledge taken from him, explains the message to others, he makes the truth clear to the people. If he hides his knowledge, he keeps the truth concealed from the people, after it was made clear to them.

And, as Allah has said, it is the only thing which has made people differ in matters of religion, and has diverted them from the path of guidance to that of misguidance. Otherwise, religion conforms with nature; human nature agrees with it and discerning mind surrenders to it when it is properly explained.

Allah says:

Then set your face uprightly for the (right) religion in natural devotion (to the truth); the nature made by Allah in which He has made men; there is no alteration (by anyone else) in the creation of Allah; that is the right (established) religion, but most people do not know (۳۰:۳۰).

So, the religion is natural; nature can never resist it, if it appears before it with some clarity,

either because of the purity of the recipient's heart, as is the case of the prophets, or because it is explained properly - the latter method invariable always depends on the .former

That is why the above-quoted verse combines the two premises: the naturalness of religion and lack of its knowledge. It says: the nature made by Allah in which He has .made men; and then says: but most people do not know

:Again Allah says

Mankind was but one people, so Allah sent the prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He sent down with them the book with truth, so that it might judge between the people in that in which they had differed. And none differed about it but the very people who were given it, after clear signs had come to them, revolting .(among themselves... (۲:۲۱۳

It shows that difference about the contents of the book emanates from the revolt of the scholars who already have its knowledge. Religious differences and deviations from the right path are caused by the revolt of the religious scholars as they conceal .the revealed truth, misinterpret it and alter it; and because of their injustice

:That is how "injustice" will be defined on the Day of Resurrection. Allah says

Then a crier will cry out among them that the curse of Allah is on the unjust, who .(hinder (people) from Allah's way and seek to make it crooked... (۷:۴۴ - ۵

.There are many verses of the same theme

Clearly, the verse under discussion (Surely

:those who conceal the clear proofs...) is based on the above-quoted verse

Mankind was but one people, so Allah sent the prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He sent down with them the book with truth, so that it might judge between the people in that in which they differed. And none differed about it but the very people who were given it, after clear signs had come to them, revolting among .(themselves... (۲:۲۱۳

And it points to the recompense of that revolt in the next sentence, "these it is whom "...Allah does curse

Qur'an: these it is whom Allah does curse, and those who curse do curse them (too). It describes the punishment of those who revolt against truth and hide the Book and the .guidance which Allah has sent down

The punishment is the curse by Allah and the curse by those who curse. The word "curse" has been repeated because the curse of Allah is different from the curse of those who curse. The curse by Allah is removal from mercy and bliss, and that by those who curse is praying to Allah to remove the cursed one from that mercy and .bliss

There is no restriction at all on the curse of Allah or the curse of those who curse, nor is there any limitation on "those who curse". This generality shows that every curse by anyone who curses is actually directed to those revolters and concealers of the Divine Proof and Guidance. And reason supports this

view: The aim of the curse is to remove the cursed one from happiness and bliss; and .there is no real happiness and bliss except the religious one

As this real religious bliss is fully explained by Allah and accepted by nature, no one can be deprived of it except the one who rejects and denies it. This deprivation is .confined to him who knows it and then knowingly rejects it

It does not affect him who did not know the said religious bliss and to whom it was not clarified. Allah has taken pledge from learned people to spread their knowledge and .to publish whatever Divine proofs and guidance they had received

If they conceal it and hold it back, then in effect they have rejected it. Therefore, "these it is whom Allah does curse, and those who curse do curse them (too)". This explanation is further supported by the following verse: "Surely those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers, these it is on whom is the curse of Allah and the ".angels and men all

surely) coming at the beginning of the verse gives = (إِنَّ Apparently, the particle inna the reason, or intensifies the theme, of the verse under discussion, by repeating its meaning in other words, "Surely those who disbelieve and die while they are "...disbelievers

Qur'an: Except those who repent... the Merciful: It is the exception from the preceding verse. It qualifies their repentance with amending and making manifest the truth. They must make their previous behaviour

.known; they must announce their repentance

In other words, they must announce to the people what they were concealing of the truth, and also make it known that previously they had concealed it. Otherwise, it will be as though they have not repented yet - because they are still hiding the fact of .their previous concealment of the truth

Qur'an: Surely those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers, these it is on whom is the curse of Allah and the angels and men all. It alludes to their persistence in .disbelief and their obstinate and stubborn refusal to accept the truth

If a man does not accept the true religion, not because of obstinacy and arrogance,) but because it was not made clear to him, then in reality he is not a disbeliever, he is weak; according to Islamic terminology, a man who does = (المُسْت_َضْعَفُ al-mustad'af (.not have true faith, but is not inimical to it]; his judgment is in the hand of Allah

This theme is supported by the fact that most of the verses describing the disbelief qualify it with "belying". Look especially at the verses of the descent of Adam, :containing the first law legislated for the mankind

We said: "Get down you therefrom all together; and if there comes to you a guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve. And (as to) those who disbelieve in and belie Our signs, they are the ,inmates of fire

(in it they shall abide." (۲:۳۹-۴۰

Likewise, in this verse the words, "Those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers," refer to those who obstinately belie the signs and guidance of Allah – those who conceal what Allah has revealed. And Allah describes their recompense in these words: "these it is on whom is the curse of Allah and the angels and men all."

It is a Divine Decree that every curse by anyone from among the angels or men, without any exception, shall be attached to them only. In this respect they are like the Satan, when Allah told him:

.(And surely on you is curse until the Day of Judgment (۱۵:۳۵

Thus, Allah made him the target of every curse from whatever source it may emanate. Likewise, these learned persons who conceal their knowledge are partners of Satan in this general and unrestricted curse.

See how hard is the tone of this verse, and how formidable its theme! We shall write something related to it, Allah willing, under the verse:

That Allah may separate the impure from the pure, and put the impure, some of it upon the other, and pile it up together, then cast it into the hell; these it is that are the losers. (۸:۳۷).

Qur'an: Abiding in it (i.e., in the curse), their chastisement shall not be lightened nor shall they be given respite. The word "curse", has been changed here to "chastisement"; it shows that the curse shall be converted into their chastisement on that Day.

In these verses, the

references to Allah have been changed several times from the first person to the third and vice versa. The verse begins with the first person pronouns: "We revealed", "We made it clear"; then the style changes, mentioning Allah by name, "Allah does curse".

The change was affected because the theme demands show of intense displeasure, and the greater the name of the displeased person, the more severe the effect of the displeasure - and none is greater than Allah.

Therefore, the action of the curse was attributed to Him by name, to give it the most vehement force. Then the reference was again changed to the first person pronouns, "I turn (mercifully); and I am the Oft-returning (to mercy)..." It was done to show the highest mercy and benevolence of Allah - every adjective is discarded, all attributes are set aside and "I Myself return to them mercifully."

You will appreciate the difference if you read this sentence thus: These it is to whom Allah turns mercifully; or thus: These it is to whom their Lord turns mercifully. Obviously, these sentences do not show that high degree of mercy that reflects from this sentence, "these it is to whom I turn (mercifully)."

The next verse again discards the pronoun for the Divine Name, "these it is on whom is the curse of Allah"; and the reason is the same as was explained for the change in the first verse.

Traditions

One of our companions has narrated from as-Sadiq (a.s.). He says: "I said to him: 'Tell

me about the word of Allah, the Mighty, the High: Surely those who conceal...'. He said: .'We are meant by it - and to Allah is the resort for help

When (Imamah) comes to one of us (i.e., the Imams), he has no authority (or, choice) (but to make it clear for the men who will be (Imam) after him.' " (al- 'Ayyashi

Al-Baqir (a.s.) said about this verse: "(Allah) means us by it, and to Allah is the resort ".for help

" '.Muhammad ibn Muslim said: "(The Imam) said: 'These are the People of the Book

The author says: All these traditions are based on the principle of the flow of the .Qur'an and its application. Otherwise, the verse is general

Some traditions quote 'Ali (a.s.) as saying: "Its interpretation is the learned people ".when they are depraved

The Prophet said about this verse: "Whoever is asked about knowledge which he has got, and he conceals it, he shall be reined on the Day of Resurrection with a bridle of fire; and it is (the import of) His words, these it is whom Allah does curse and those (who curse do curse them (too)." (Majma'u 'l-bayan

The author says: These two traditions confirm what we have written in the $$SUB[-.Commentary] Commentary

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) said explaining the words of Allah, and those who curse do curse them (too): "We are those (who curse); and they say that it means the vermins of the (earth." (al-'Ayyashi

The author says: The explanation given by the Imam reminds one of

:the import of the verse

and the witnesses shall say: “These are they who lied against their Lord.” Now … .(surely the curse of Allah is on the unjust (۱۱:۱۸

The Imams are the witnesses, allowed by Allah to speak on the Day of Judgment, who speak the right thing. The Imam also mentioned some people's explanation that those who curse refers to the vermins of the earth. This interpretation is attributed to the exegetes like Mujahid, 'Ikrimah and others; and some traditions ascribe it to the .Prophet

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: about the verse, Surely those who conceal the clear proofs (.and the guidance, (that it means the proofs and guidance) “regarding 'Ali.” (ibid

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۱۶۳ – ۱۶۷

point

(۱۶۳)وَإِلَـٰهُكُمۡ إِلَـٰهٌ وَٰحِدٌ ۖ لَّآ إِلَـٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ٱلرَّحۡمَـٰنُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ

(۱۶۴)إِنَّ فِى خَلۡقِ ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلۡأَرۡضِ وَٱخۡتِلَـٰفِ ٱلَّيۡلِ وَٱلنَّهَارِ وَٱلۡفُلۡكِ ٱلَّتِى تَجۡرِى فِى ٱلۡبَحۡرِ بِمَا يَنفَعُ ٱلنَّاسَ وَمَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ مِنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ مِن مَّآءٍ فَأَحۡيَا بِهِ ٱلۡأَرۡضَ بَعۡدَ مَوۡتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ دَآبَّةٍ وَتَصۡرِيفِ ٱلرِّيَـٰحِ وَٱلسَّحَابِ ٱلۡمُسَخَّرِ بَيۡنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ وَٱلۡأَرۡضِ لَأَيَـٰتٍ لِّقَوۡمٍ يَعۡقِلُونَ

(۱۶۵) وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ أَندَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمۡ كَحُبِّ ٱللَّهِ ۖ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِّلَّهِ ۗ وَلَوۡ يَرَى ٱلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوٓاْ إِذۡ يَرَوۡنَ ٱلۡعَذَابَ أَنَّ ٱلۡقُوَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ شَدِيدُ ٱلۡعَذَابِ

(۱۶۶)إِذۡ تَبَرَّأَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱتُّبِعُواْ مِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّبَعُواْ وَرَأَوُاْ ٱلۡعَذَابَ وَتَقَطَّعَتۡ بِهِمُ ٱلۡأَسۡبَابُ

(۱۶۷) وَقَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّبَعُواْ لَوۡ أَنَّ لَنَا كَرَّةً فَنَتَبَرَّأَ مِنۡهُمۡ كَمَا تَبَرَّءُواْ مِنَّا ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ يُرِيهِمُ ٱللَّهُ أَعۡمَـٰلَهُمۡ حَسَرَٰتٍ عَلَيۡهِمۡ ۖ وَمَا هُم بِخَـٰرِجِينَ مِنَ ٱلنَّارِ

And your God is one God! there is no god but He; He is the Beneficent, the Merciful .((۱۶۳

Most surely

in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, and the ships that run in the sea with that which profits men, and the water that Allah sends down from the cloud, then gives life with it to the earth after its death and spreads in it all (kinds of) animals, and the changing of the winds, and the clouds made subservient between the heaven and the earth, there are signs for a people who .(understand (۱۶۴

And there are some among men who take for them-selves equals to God besides Allah, whom they love as the love for Allah, and those who believe are stronger in (their) love for Allah, and O that those who are unjust could see, when they see the chastisement, that the power is wholly Allah's and that Allah is severe in chastisement .((۱۶۵

When those who were followed shall renounce those who followed (them), and they .(see the chastisement and their ties are cut asunder (۱۶۶

And those who followed shall say: "O were there for us a return, then we would renounce them as they have renounced us." Thus will Allah show them their deeds to .(be intense regret to them, and they shall not come forth from the fire (۱۶۷

Commentary

point

These verses are connected together in one context, with a single theme. They remind the audience about the belief of mono-theism offering proofs to support it, .and describe polytheism and its ultimate result

Qur'an: And your God is

god) in the Commentary of = الإِلَـهُ) one God: We have explained the meaning of al-ilah the first verse of the first chapter, the Opening. Oneness is a self-evident idea, which .needs no explanation

A thing is called one in view of one of its attributes, for example, one man, one scholar or one poet. These words show that the related attribute is indivisible, and not subject .to plurality

For example, the manhood of one man, Zayd, is not shared between him and someone else. It is in contrast with manhood of two men - Zayd and 'Amr, for exam- .ple - which is shared by the two, and is therefore numerous

Thus Zayd, in context of his attribute of manhood, is one and indivisible and not subject to plurality. But when he is looked at in this very context combined with his other attributes - like his knowledge, power, life, etc. - then he is not one; he is a .multiple in reality

Allah is One, in view of His attribute, like His divinity, which is not shared by anyone else. He is one in His divinity as well as in His knowledge, power and life. He has knowledge, unlike other knowledges, and power and life unlike others' powers and .lives

Also, He is one because His attributes are not multiple, they are not separate from one another except in their verbal meanings; His knowledge, His power and His life, all is one thing, all is His very person; none of them is

.separate from the other

Allah knows by His power, and has power by His life, and is alive by His know-ledge. He is not like other things where attributes are multiple and numerous not only in .meanings but in reality also

Sometimes a thing possesses the characteristic of oneness in its personality, that is, by its very nature and essence, it cannot accept multiplication or division in its self; it .cannot be divided into various parts or into its person and name etc

This oneness is called oneness of person, and it is referred to with the word al-ahad (اَلأَحَدُ = one); this word is never used except as a first construct of a genitive construction or in a negative, prohibitive or similar sentences, in the meaning of no .one, any one, etc. For example, we say: No one came to me

This sentence negates the personality itself, irrespective of its oneness or plurality, because this oneness is related to its nature and essence, and not to its attribute. This connotation will be lost if we were to say, one man did not come to me. This sentence does not imply that two or more men did not come; it is because "oneness" in this .sentence is an attribute of the corner, not of his person

The reader should keep in mind this short explanation until we write about it in detail. :Allah willing, under the verse

(Say: "He, Allah, is One." (۱۱۲:۱

The words, "And your God is one God," imply that divinity, godhead, is

exclusively reserved for Allah, and that His oneness in divinity is such as becomes His .sublime status

the one), as understood by the audience of the Qur'an, = (اَلْوَاحِدُ The word al-wahid gives the idea of oneness, of a general type. That meaning may be applied to various .kinds of oneness. But only a few of those connotations may be applied for Allah

The word "one", may show oneness of number, of species, or of genes, etc. And the people were bound to take it in the meaning best suited to their beliefs and ideas. That is why the Qur'an did not say: And Allah is one God. Because this sentence does not establish monotheism; even the polytheists say that He is one God, in the same .way as each of their deities is one god

Nor would have the sentence, And your God is one, established monotheism. Because it could be imagined that He is one in the species - of divinity. People say, when they enumerate the species of animals: Horse is one; mule is one - although horse and .mule are manifold in number

That is why the Qur'an said: "And your God is one God." "One God" (in contrast to two or more gods) is made predicate of "Your God". In this form the sentence clearly establishes the belief of monotheism, by restricting the godhead to one of the gods in .which they believed

Qur'an: there is no god but He: It further emphasizes the clear declaration of the preceding

sentence about monotheism and negates every possible misinterpretation or .superstition

god) = إلـه) no) is used here to negate the genes; ilah = (لا "The negative particle "la denotes here real and actual God. The sentence has an implied predicate “existent”, ."and the meaning will be as follows: There is no real and actual god existing “but He

The pronoun “He”, used in place of the proper name, Allah, is in nominative, not subjunctive case. Therefore, the word “but” is not used here as particle of exception; rather it is an adjective in the sense of “other than”. The complete sentence, thus, .means: There is no real god, other than Allah, existing

The sentence therefore aims at repudiation of gods, other than Allah - the deities which had no real existence outside the imagination of their worshippers. It does not aim at refuting other deities and proving the existence of Allah, as many scholars have thought. Our explanation is supported by the fact that the sentence needs only a .negative mode, and not a negative followed by affirmative

Only repudiation of other imaginary deities is enough to confirm the Oneness of Allah in His godhead. More-over, the Qur'an treats the existence of Allah as a self-evident truth which needs no proof or argument. The Qur'an only cares to affirm and prove His attributes; for example, it only proves that Allah is One; that He is the Creator, the .Knower, the Powerful and so on

Question: You say that the sentence has an implied predicate

existent (or some other word of the same meaning). If so, then it would only negate the actual existence of other deities - but not the "possibility" of their existence.

Reply:

1. It is meaningless to suppose that there could be a "possible" or transient being (having equal relation with existence and non-existence), which would be the ultimate cause of all the existing things and their affairs.

2. We could change the predicate to "true" or "actual"; then the meaning would be: There is no god in reality other than He.

Qur'an: the Beneficent, the Merciful: We have explained its meaning in the exegesis of the first verse of the first Chapter, the Opening. With these two names, the meaning of Allah's Lordship becomes complete. From Him emanates every general bounty - pursuant to His Beneficence - and every special favour, in the way of guidance and the next world's bliss - pursuant to His Mercy.

Qur'an: Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth...: As mentioned in the beginning, the verse aims at proving what the preceding verse has established: "And your God is one God: there is no god but He; He is the Beneficent, the Merciful."

The verse under discussion may be analyzed as follows: There is a god for each of these phenomena; there is only one God for all of them; and that one God is your God too; He is the Beneficent who bestows general bounties; and the Merciful, who leads to the ultimate happiness - the

.blessings of the next world

These are the established facts; and in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, and all the phenomena mentioned in this .verse, there are signs to prove these facts for a people who understand

The verse offers arguments to prove that there is a god, and He is one - the God of this magnificent universe is One, and He Himself is the God of man. It is not the import .of this verse to prove the existence of the God of man, or His oneness

Otherwise, all the phenomena mentioned in it would have all together constituted only one sign - by showing that the management of all is inter-related and forms a single system. If so, then the preceding verse should have been restyled in this way: :And your God is one, there is no god but He. The proofs in short run are as follows

First Proof: These heavens, the canopy high above us with all these awe-inspiring luminous stars, constellations and galaxies shining therein; this earth, our shelter and refuge, with all its wonderful natural systems; all these regular changes and alter-nations occurring in this world - the alternation of the day and the night, the running ships and boats, the pouring rains, the changing winds, the suspended clouds - all these things need by their very nature, a Creator. There is, therefore, a Creator God .for all of them

Second Proof: Look at these heavenly

bodies, varying in mass from the minutest to the largest. There is one so small that the scientists have found its volume to be equal to: ۰.۰۰۰۰۰۰۰۰۰ ۰۰۰۰۰۰۰۰۰۰۰۰۰۰۳۳ cubic cm.; while there are others so huge as to be equal to millions of our earth - which in itself has a diameter of about ۹,۰۰۰ miles.

They have found the distance between some celestial bodies to be ۳,۰۰۰,۰۰۰ light years. A light year is approximately ۳۶۵ x ۲۴ x ۶۰ x ۶۰ x ۳۰۰,۰۰۰ kilometres.(۱)

Ponder on these figures which boggle the mind and stupefy the brain. Then decide, as you wish to decide, about this unique and wonderful system. Keep in mind that each of these untold billions of the suns and planets act on, and react to,. the others, no matter where and how distant they are from each other.

This goes on by the law of gravity, which permeates the whole universe, and through light and heat. In this way, the established system continues without any impediment.

And it is an all-pervasive never stopping system, run according to an established law. Even the theory of relativity (which says that the directions of movements in the physical world are subject to deviations) affirms that that deviation itself is governed by another inviolable law.

This movement, this general rotation, appears in every part of the universe in a uniform way; look for example at the movement of the sun with its planets and satellites.

Now look nearer at hand at our own earth, with its

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۱ - A light year is equal to ۵,۸۸۰,۰۰۰ million miles. With tremendous advance in astronomy, it is now more usual to reckon distances in the parsec, which is equal to ۳.۲۵۸ light years, or ۱۹,۱۵۰,۰۰۰ million miles. (tr.)

own moon and various systems (the day and the night, the winds, the clouds and the rains). Reduce your circle of vision once more, to ponder on earthly matters and creatures - minerals, vegetables, animals and various other things.

Find out about countless species one after another; then go on reducing the circle until you come to the elements, then to the atoms; then the particles of the atoms; finally you shall come to what is today the last stage of the scientific discovery, that is, the electron and the proton.

Even there you will find a miniature solar system at work; a nucleus around which these smallest particles revolve, exactly like the movement of the planets around their suns, and the endless journey of the suns (with their families) towards an unknown destination.

Stop at any stage in this scientific journey and you will find an amazing system - a system whose wonders will never cease and whose marvels will never stop. There is no exception in its flow, not even one; nor is there any question of chance in its intricately-woven design, not even a rare one. Man cannot reach its shore, nor does he fully comprehend all the signs on this path.

Proceed from the smallest to the largest heavenly body. You will find it a single universe with one and unified system and inter-related arrangement. Look through the most powerful far-reaching telescope and use the most advanced observatory, you will find the same law governing all celestial bodies.

Now, reverse your

journey, until you reach again to the smallest unit. Break it down to its parts, reaching to molecule. You will find in it a miniature universe, with the same design and the same inter-related arrangement - although the two vastly differ in their natures and .identities

In short, the universe is one, and its arrangement and management inter-related; all its parts - no matter how diverse and multiple they may be - are managed under a ;single system

.(and the faces are humbled before the Living, the Self-subsistent God (۲۰:۱۱۱

.Therefore, the God of the universe, is one; He alone created and He alone manages it

Third Proof: Man is an earthly creature. He lives on the earth and after his death returns to it. His existence and life needs nothing more than the above-mentioned .system that governs the whole universe - a unified and inter-related system

The heavenly bodies with the light and heat they generate, the earth with its alternated days and nights, the winds, the clouds and the rains, the beneficial goods it produces and which are transported from region to region - these are the things man .requires for his physical needs, for his existence and continuation of life

.(And Allah en-compasses them on every side (۸۵:۲۰

It proves that the God who created the universe and manages its affairs is the same God who also created man and manages his affairs. God of the universe is the God of .man

Again, it is God who bestows on every thing what it needs for

happiness of this world and for bliss of the next (if he is qualified for the bliss of the next life) - because the next world is the ultimate destination of this abode. How can ?anyone man-age the end of any affair other than he who manages the affair itself

This is the proof given by the two names, The Beneficent, the Merciful. And in this way is perfected the rational argument offered by this verse for the preceding one. This view is strengthened by the fact that this verse begins with the particle inna (إِنَّ = .surely) which is also used for offering arguments. And Allah knows better

In short, the words, "Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth", point to the heavens with all their luminary bodies, and the earth with all the wonderful creations and astounding products it contains; the forms which give each species its name, the matter which constitutes its body; their transformation from one form to the other, their recurring additions and subtractions, their joining together and :breaking apart. As Allah says

;(Do they not see that We come into the land curtailing it of its sides? (۱۳:۴۱

Do not those who disbelieve see that the heavens and the earth were closed up, so (We have opened them: and We have made of water every thing living... ? (۲۱:۳۰

Qur'an: and the alternation of the night and the day: It refers to the changes in durations of the nights and the days which are

:caused by a combination of two factors

First is the daily rotation of the earth on its axis. This always keeps a little more than half of the earth's sphere facing towards the sun, which sends light and heat to the earth's surface - and that is called the day. The opposite side of the sphere is dark, throwing a conical shade in the space - and it is the night. The day and the night are .continuously rotating on the face of the earth

The second factor is the revolution of the earth on its orbit around the sun. The earth's axis does not form a right angle with the orbit; it has a tilt (of ۲۳½° [tr.]); and because of that tilt the earth's north-south position vis-à-vis the sun changes at different times of the year; when the northern hemisphere is inclined to the sun, it is summer in the north and winter in the south; when the southern hemisphere is .inclined to the sun, the north experiences winter and the south, summer

Also, it is because of this tilt that the equator and the North and the South Poles always have days and nights of equal length: The two Poles have only one day and .one night in a year - each night and each day being six months long

When it is day on the North Pole, the South Pole has its night, and vice versa. As for the equator, it has about ۳۶۵ days and ۳۶۵ nights in

a solar year - all of equal length. As for the other regions, the days and the nights differ - in number as well as in length, depending on their distance from the equator and the two Poles. Full description of this phenomenon may be found in the sciences .concerned

It is because of this difference that the sun's life-giving light and heat reach various regions of the earth with varying intensity. This in its turn creates diversity in various factors governing the earth and its environment. And man profits from that diversity .in numerous ways

is (الفُلْکُ) Qur’an: And the ships that run in the sea with that which profits men: al-Fulk have (الفُلْکَ_ه) boat, ship; it is used for singular and plural both. al-Fulk and al-fulkah .date) are synonymous = (اَلتّمْرُ، التّمْرَةُ the same meaning; as at-tamr and at-tamrah

that which profits men", refers to various types of cargoes and food items which are" .transported by ship from coast to coast, from region to region

The verse counts the ships (which are made by man) side by side with those things and natural phenomena which are beyond human power, like the heavens, the earth and the alternation of the day and the night. It shows that ultimately the ships too, like .those natural phenomena, are the handiwork of Allah

On deep consideration, when we ascribe a work to a man, it has no more significance than ascribing it to a natural cause. Of course, man has a

free will and power. But he is not a sufficient or total cause; nor does that freedom .make him independent of Allah

He is as much in need of Allah's will and permission as any other natural cause. A natural cause acts on, and reacts with, a matter and through a process of .combination and break up gives it a form - let us say, turns it into a rock

A man cuts, breaks up and joins some matters giving them a form - let us say, turn them into a boat. Is there any difference between the two makers? Both ultimately draw their strength and ability from Divine creation and invention; nothing is .independent of Allah either in its person or in its activities

Boat too, like all physical creations, depends on Allah in its existence, as well as in management of its affairs. Allah has pointed to this fact in the verse, where Ibrahim :(a.s.) is quoted as telling his people about the idols which they worshipped as god

.(And Allah has created you and what you make (۳۷:۹۶

Admittedly, an idol is but a thing made by man, and Ibrahim (a.s.) ascribes its making .to Allah. The same applies to the boats and ships

:Also, Allah says

.(And His are the ships reared aloft in the sea like mountains (۵۵:۲۴

:According to this verse, the ships belong to Allah. Again, He says

and He has made the ships subservient to you, that they might run their course in the .(sea by His command... (۱۴:۳۲

This verse declares

.that also the ships' affairs is in Allah's hands

Can Man–made Things be Attributed to Allah

How heedless are those who think that the things made and manufactured by man are exclusively his creation and can-not be attributed to Allah at all - just because !they are made by man's will and choice

First, in this group are the materialists who do not believe in a Creator. They say: The theists believed in a Creator because they found in the nature many things and happenings whose material cause they did not know. As they knew that nothing could happen without a cause, they had to admit that there was a cause for such things and .happenings, which was not known to them yet

In this way they came to believe that there was, for those things of unknown cause, a cause whose reality was hidden from them and which was beyond the natural world - .and that cause was God

According to the materialists, the belief in the existence of a Creator was a hypothesis which emanated from the ignorance of the primitive man: that man was surrounded by so many phenomena of unknown causes; for example, atmospheric changes and .many happenings on the earth

Likewise, there were many psychological factors (whose natural causes are unknown .to the science even today). And this resulted in the belief in a super-natural Creator

They say: Now the sciences have succeeded in unravelling many mysteries of natural phenomena, and in identifying their natural causes. Thus, one of the two pillars of the above-mentioned hypothesis has been

pulled down - that is, the need of some natural phenomena for a super-natural cause. Now remains the other pillar - that is, the need of some psychological factors for an .immaterial cause

The recent advances in the field of the organic chemistry, give us hope that man will soon understand the mysteries of the soul; then he will be able to manufacture the .life-giving cells and germs

This will enable him to create any living being and bring about any psychological effect. Then the second pillar of this hypothesis will go down - and there will remain no .basis for believing in a super-natural Creator

Man will create whatever he wishes of spiritual and psychological effects, as he is making today whatever he likes of the physical and material things - although just yesterday he was insisting that there was a hypothetical super-natural cause for these things. Now we know why he held that belief - it was just because he did not .know the real cause of these phenomena

Comments

First: If these fat-heads were to wake up from their conceit, they would see that the theists from the very beginning of their belief in a Creator (and there never was a beginning for it) affirmed that creative cause for the whole universe - those things having known physical causes as well as those having unknown causes. According to them this whole lot, in its entirety, needs a cause, separate from the universe. Clearly what the materialists reject is not what the theists

.believe in

The theists - and the history and the research has not been able to pin-point a starting point for the belief in the Creator, in the history of humanity - have believed in the existence of one or more creators for the whole universe, although the Qur'an has shown that the religion of monotheism appeared before poly-theism; and the orientalist, Max Muller, the pioneer in the studies of Sanskrit, also has thrown light .upon it

Obviously, the theists, even the primitive man among them, used to see and .recognize physical causes of many physical phenomena

Yet, they affirmed that there was a God for the whole universe (not excluding those phenomena of known causes). Evidently, when they believed in the existence of the Creator, basing their argument on the all-pervasive system of cause-and-effect, it was not to solve the problem of some phenomena of which they could not find a .cause

After all, they did not say that some parts of the universe needed a Creator, while .others (having some known causes) did not need that

What they believed was this: The universe is made up of a series of natural causes and effects. This whole universe, taken as a composite unit, needs and requires a Cause, above all other causes; all actions and reactions, all causes and effects, interacting amongst its countless components, rely and depend on that Cause of the causes. The belief in that Supreme Cause does not negate the general law of causality which permeates all components of the

.universe

In the same way, the existence of material causes for the material effects does not make this whole chain of the causes and effects independent of the Supreme Cause, .who is out of this universe and separate from it

When we say 'out of this universe', we do not mean that the Supreme Cause is placed) on the summit of the pyramid of the causes and effects. We mean that the Supreme Cause encompasses the whole universe with all its causes and effects, from every (.possible side

The materialists have fallen in an amusing contradiction. They believe that there is a general all-pervasive compulsion in all happenings in the world - including human actions. According to them, every action, every happening, is a compulsory, inescap... .able effect of various causes

And at the same time they say that if a man created another man, it would not finally .end at the Cause of the universe - if there is such a cause

This fine and deep theme is always present in the subconscious mind of common people (even if a simple man is unable to express it in so many words). That is why they say that the whole universe - together with all its causes and effects - is the .creation of a Creator God

Second: When the theist philosophers furnish the rational proofs to prove the existence of the Creator, they do so after establishing that there is an all-pervasive system of causality in the world. Then they proceed to prove that all these

.possible", transient causes must end at an essential, self-existent cause"

This method has been used by them for thousands of years, from the earliest age of philosophy to this day. There was never any doubt in their minds that the effects - including the natural transient causes - need an essential Cause. In other words, when they attribute the effects to an essential cause, it is not done because they do .not know some thing's natural cause

Third: The Qur'an proves the oneness of the Creator. It does so by showing that all components of the universe are governed by the general law of causality; it accepts the attribution of each happening to its particular cause, and confirms what normal .wisdom says about it

It ascribes natural phenomena to their natural causes, and attributes to man the actions done by his own free will. There is no need to quote here numerous verses .based on this theme

And then it ascribes all these things and happenings - without any exception - to Allah. ,For example

;(Allah is the Creator of every thing (۳۹:۶۲

;(That is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of every thing; there is no god but He (۴۰:۶۲

;(His is the creation and command (۷:۵۴

His is what is in the heaven and what is in the earth and what is between them two .(and what is beneath the ground (۲۰:۶

Whatever may be called a "thing", it is created by Allah, and may be attributed to Him .in a way befitting His Majesty

There are other verses

which attribute an action to its doer and at the same time ascribe it to Allah. For ,example

.(And Allah has created you and what you make (۳۷:۹۶

The verse attributes the actions of men to them and then attributes their creation and :that of their actions to Allah. Also, it says

.(and you did not smite when you smote (the enemy), but it was Allah Who smote (۸:۱۷

This verse admits that the act of throwing arrow was done by the Messenger of Allah, and then negates it, ascribing it to Allah Himself. There are other verses of the same .connotation

There are some other verses which combine the two attributions in a general way. ,For example

;(and Who created every thing, then ordained for it a measure (۲۵:۲ ...

Surely We have created every thing according to a measure... And every thing small ;(and great is written down (۵۴:۴۹ - ۵۳

;(Allah indeed has made a measure for every thing (۶۵:۳

And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it, and We do not send it down .(but in a known measure (۱۵:۲۱

Making or appointing a measure for every thing means that Allah has confined it .within the limits of the material causes and the boundaries of time and space

In short, it can never be doubted that the Qur'an proves the existence of the One and Only God basing its arguments on the system of causality found in all the components of the universe; and then it attributes the whole universe to

Allah, Who created and made all of it. It is not that we ascribe some things to Allah and .some others to their material causes - as the materialists allege

Why could not the materialists understand this clear fact? They were misled by the Church in the medieval ages, whose pseudo-philosophers tackled this and similar problems in the manner quoted by the materialists; writers of other religions too rely .on similar arguments

The fact is that their discourses were distorted, and their arguments lacked precision. They wanted to explain their true claim (which, their reason told them in general .(terms, was correct

They tried to go into details of that general idea. But their weak understanding and unripe reasoning led them away from the right method; consequently, they .generalized their claim and misdirected their argument

It were they who attributed every thing or effect of unknown cause directly to Allah, and said that voluntary actions did not need any outside cause, and that consequently man's voluntary actions did not belong to Allah; man was independent of Allah in such .actions

:We have written on this topic in detail under the verse

;(but He does not cause to err by it (any) except the transgressors (۲:۲۶

.here something more has been added to complete the discourse

Another group is that of some Muslim traditionalists and theologians (and some others) whose vision does not penetrate to the inner core of a subject. They did not understand how could the voluntary actions of man be attributed to Allah in a manner

.that would conform with His Sublime Majesty

Consequently, they thought that man-made things could not be said to have been made by Allah, and especially those things which were made exclusively for sins, for .example, liquor, and instruments of music and gambling etc

:Allah says

intoxicants and games of chance and (sacrificing to) stones set up and (dividing by) ... .(arrows are only an abomination of Satan's handiwork... (۵:۹۰

And evidently what Allah counts as handiwork of Satan should not be ascribed to Allah .Himself

Comment: The discourse written earlier is enough to show the invalidity of this erroneous surmise- both from the Qur'an and traditions and the rational point of view. The fact is that man's voluntary actions may be attributed to Allah in a befitting manner, and likewise man-made things, being the result of those actions, may be .attributed to Allah

Moreover, "the stones", mentioned in the verse ۵:۹۰ above, refers to the idols and images which are set for worship, and the verse ۳۷:۹۶ (And Allah has created you and .what you make) says that those idols too are creation of Allah

Obviously, an idol may be looked at from different perspectives. From one point of view it may be ascribed to Allah, for example, looking at the nature of its existence, .disregarding the fact of its being used for sin of polytheism

What is an idol? It is just a stone or metal with a particular shape; and as such there is no reason why it should not be attributed to the Creator of

.all things

Of course, from another angle it is a thing that is worshipped besides Allah; and from this perspective it cannot be attributed to Allah; it should rather be ascribed to the .Satan or man. The same principle may be applied for other man-made things

It clearly shows that man-made things may be attributed to Allah just like any other natural phenomenon, without any difference. Of course, it all depends on the degree (.of existence the said things enjoy. (Think on it

Qur'an: and the water that Allah sends down from the cloud, then gives you life with it to the earth after its death and spreads in it all (kinds of) animals: What is rain? There are various elements mixed in the water of rivers and other water sources. Then it turns into steam, going up and carrying heat. The steam continues to ascend until it .reaches extremely cold strata of the atmosphere

Then the steam changes into water coming down as rain. Some times the steam is frozen into snow or hail. In what-ever form, it comes down to us, which drinks it in and becomes alive again. Also, the earth stores a major part of the rain, etc., above or below its surface, and that water comes out and flows as streams and rivers, etc., on .the face of earth

Water is the source of life for every living thing. The rain coming down from the clouds is a phenomenon of life, which takes place according to a well regulated and

intricately laid down system – without any break down or exception. The genesis of .vegetables and animals – of all types – depends on water

The rain – being inter–woven with so many phenomena of the universe, horizontally and vertically – becomes an inseparable part of the universe. It needs a Creator to .create it, a cause to bring it into existence. In other words, there is a God for it

And man's genesis and life depend on the rain and water. Therefore, the same God who has created water and the intricate system of rain, is the God who has created .man. The God of rain is the God of man

Qur'an: and the changing of the wind: It refers to the changes in directions of the wind, because of various natural factors, the most important of them being the sun's .rays. The sun raises the temperature of the air, making it lighter and less dense

This lighter air is unable to carry the load of the surrounding air which is cooler and .heavier. Therefore, the heavier air glides down, forcibly displacing the lighter one

The lighter air travels in a direction opposite to that of the heavier one. And the resulting current is called wind. The wind helps in pollination of trees, shrubs and flowers, removes atmospheric pollutions, carries rain clouds from one place to another, besides rendering many other services. Blowing of wind is a most important .factor in the genesis and life of vegetable, animal and man

Wind, by itself, proves that

there is a Creator God; by its inter-woven relation with other terrestrial and extra terrestrial phenomena, proves that there is only one Creator for the whole universe; and by being a very important factor for the genesis and life of man, proves that the .God of man and the God of the universe is one and the same

Qur'an: and the clouds made subservient between the heaven and the earth: as-is condensed watery vapour floating in air at some distance; it is the (اَلسَّحابُ) Sahab .source of rain

fog; = (اَلضَّبَابُ As long as the steam remains on or near the earth, it is called ad-dabab mist); when it leaves the earth and floats in the air at a distance, it is called as-sahab, etc., all having the same meaning: cloud. at- ,(اَلغَمَامُ) and alghamam (اَلغَيْمُ) al-ghaym .(to subjugate a thing, to make it subservient in its activities = (التَّسْخِيْرُ Taskhir

The cloud is made subservient, in its flow and rain, to the winds and atmospheric .temperature and other relevant factors, by the permission of Allah

.The cloud is a sign of Allah in the same way as other things mentioned with it

The alternation of the day and the night, the rain coming down from the clouds, the blowing of wind and the subservient clouds are the main natural phenomena, which together make up the system of creation in the terrestrial world, like the vegetable, .the animal and the man

This verse may therefore be taken to be a

:detail of the general statement contained in the verse

and He blessed therein and made therein its foods, in four periods: alike for the ... .(seekers (۴۱:۱۰

is masdar of (اَلعَقْل)) Qur’an: there are signs for a people who understand. al-'Aql he understood, he understands). It denotes perfect = (عَقَلَ، يَعْقِلُ 'aqala, ya'qilu .comprehension and understanding

al-'Aql is that by which man differentiates between good and bad, distinguishes fact from fiction, and discerns truth and falsehood. It is the self same man who perceives; it is not one of his faculties and characteristics which are like branches of the soul, for .example, the memory, and the eye-sight, etc

Qur’an: And there are some among men who take for them-selves equals (i.e., اَلمِثْلُ) is on the paradigm of al-mithl (اَلنِّدُّ) objects of worship) besides Allah: an-Nidd and has the same meaning: equal, alike, etc. In some other verses Allah has used a (,slightly different phrase; for example

;(therefore do not set up equals to Allah (۲:۲۲

.(and they set up equals with Allah (۱۴:۳۰

The style has been changed here to “besides Allah” because it is preceded by the ”...;exclusive statement: “And your God is one God! there is no god but He

Thus anyone taking any object of worship besides Allah would violate that exclusiveness without any justification; he would take as god something which, he is well aware, is not god; he would do so just in pursuit of his base desire, and in complete disregard to the decree

.of his reason

That is why Allah has used the word “equals” as common noun, to show their degradation: “And there are some among men who take for themselves equals ”.besides Allah

Qur’an: Whom they love as the love for Allah, and those who believe are stronger in they love them); the = (يُحِبّون_َهُمْ (their) love for Allah: The word used is yuhibbunahum objective pronoun used here is reserved for rational beings. It means that the word “equals” does not refer to idols only, it includes also the angels and those men who .were worshipped besides Allah

Rather, it covers all those who were obeyed by people without any authority from :Allah. This interpretation gets support from the verse following it

.(When those who were followed shall renounce those who followed (them) (۲:۱۶۶

:Also, Allah says

;(and (that) some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allah (۳:۶۴ ...

.(They have taken their doctors of law and their monks for lords besides Allah (۹:۳۱

The verse shows that love may be attributed to Allah in reality, contrary to the claims of those who say that love, being a branch of the faculty of desire, is related in reality to the body and the matters concerning the body only; and cannot be attributed as .such to Allah

According to them, love of God means obedience to Him, doing what He commands us to do and refraining from what He forbids; thus love may be attributed to Allah only in :a metaphorical sense, as Allah says

Say: “If you

.(love Allah, then follow me, Allah will love you and forgive you your sins" (۳:۳۱

But the verse under discussion goes against their claim. The phrase "stronger in (their) love for Allah", shows that love of Allah may vary in intensity; it is stronger in the believers than in those who take others as equals to Allah. On the other hand, if love is taken to mean obedience, the meaning would be: "and those who believe are ."more obedient to Allah

Obviously, there could be no question here of any comparative degree of obedience, because the obedience of others is no obedience at all in the eyes of Allah. There-.refore, "love" here has been used in its real, not metaphorical, sense

:It is supported also by the verse which says

Say: "If your fathers and your sons and your brethren and your mates and your kinsfolk and property which you have acquired, and the trade slackness of which you fear and dwellings which you like, are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and .(striving in His way… " (۹:۲۴

more loved). Evidently the love = أَحَبُّ)The word translated here as 'dearer' is ahabb ascribed to Allah, and that ascribed to His Messenger, and the love attributed to the fathers, the sons, and the property, etc., is all of the same quiddity, all of it has the .same reality

Otherwise, the phrase 'dearer to you' could not be used. The comparative degree - signifies that both sides - the preferred one and the preferred against

share in the basic quality, although they differ in its degree, one being stronger, the other weaker.

The verse condemns those who take others as equals to Allah, saying: "whom they love as the love for Allah"; then it praises the believers, saying that they, "are stronger in (their) love for Allah."

This comparison between the two groups apparently shows that the former has been condemned because they have divided their love between Allah and those whom they have taken as equals to Allah. There was possibility of a misunderstanding that if they had loved Allah more, they would not have been blamed.

But the next sentences leave no room for such erroneous surmises. "O that those who are unjust could see when they see the chastisement that the power is wholly Allah's... When those who were followed shall renounce those who followed (them), and they see the chastisement and their ties are cut asunder...

Thus will Allah show them their deeds to be intense regret to them..." These verses make it clear that they have been condemned not because of the love, per se, but because of its concomitant, that is, following. They followed false deities thinking that those deities had power which would help the followers to fulfil their desires or to ward off some undesirable situation.

Thus, they discarded the truth either wholly or in some aspects - and the one who follows Allah in some aspects only, is not a follower at all. Thus, there is no room for the above-mentioned

misunderstanding. It is now clear that man should not take any partner for Allah in .this love, otherwise, it will be polytheism

However, when the love for Allah becomes stronger, the lover does not follow anyone other than Allah; he exclusively obeys the commands of Allah. That is why the .”believers have been praised that they “are stronger in (their) love for Allah

Now we know that the love has been praised and condemned because of its concomitant, that is, following and obedience. If a man loves someone other than Allah in obedience to the commands of Allah, when that someone calls to the :obedience of Allah only, then such a love cannot be censured at all. As Allah says

Say: ”If your fathers and your sons... are dearer to you than Allah and His .(Messenger...” (۹:۲۴

This verse assigns to the Messenger (S) a love as it assigns it to Allah Himself; it is so because love of the Messenger of Allah (S) is one with the love of Allah. Why? Because the effect of this love, that is, following of the Messenger (S) is exactly the obedience :of Allah. Allah Himself calls to the obedience of His Messenger, as He says

And We did not send any messenger but that he should be obeyed by Allah's ;(permission (۴:۶۴

.(Say: “If you love Allah, then follow me, Allah will love you” (۳:۳۱

In the same category comes the love of any one whose obedience leads to the obedience of Allah, for example, a religious scholar who

guides people by his knowledge, a sign that points to Allah, the Qur'an which brings the reciter nearer to Allah, and things like that. All these are loved because of the love .of Allah, and by following them one obeys Allah and comes nearer to Him

In short, whoever loves any one besides Allah, thinking that he has a power, and follows him in order to fulfil some of his needs, or obeys him in a matter which Allah has not allowed, then he has indeed taken other objects of worship besides Allah, and .surely Allah will show them their deeds to be intense regret to them

On the other hand, the believers are those who love nothing except Allah, do not seek power except from Allah, and do not follow except that which is from the commands .and prohibitions of Allah. They are those who are sincere to Allah in religion

Also, it is clear that the love of those whose love is Allah's love, and whose obedience Allah's obedience (like the Prophet and his progeny; the divine scholars, the Book of Allah and the traditions of His Prophet; in short, every thing that leads one to Allah's remembrance in a sincere way) is diametrically opposed to polytheism. Indeed, one proceeds nearer to Allah by loving and following the above-mentioned personalities .and things

:To honour and respect them is a part of piety, and love and fear of Allah. As Allah says

(and whoever respects the signs of Allah, this surely is (the outcome

.(of the piety of hearts (۲۲:۳۲

means the signs that lead or point to some-thing; the phrase, (الشَّعَآئِرُ) ash-Sha'a'ir 'the signs of Allah' is general, not restricted to any particular thing like the Safa and .the Marwah, etc

It means that one must respect every sign of Allah, every divinely approved symbol which reminds one of Allah; because it is an outcome of piety, a reflection of the love .and fear of Allah. And this principle applies to all the signs which lead one to piety

Of course, it is clear as day that one should not think that those signs and symbols are in any way independent of Allah, or that they control for themselves or for others any harm or profit, or that they have any independent authority over their own or others' .life, death or resurrection

Evidently, if one had such a belief, then these things would not remain signs of Allah, they would become equals of Allah - and it would be ash-shirk (الشِّرْكُ) = ascribing .partners to Allah); may He protect you from such polytheism

Qur'an: O that those who are unjust could see, when they see the chastisement, that the power is wholly Allah's and that Allah is severe in chastisement: Apparently, "when they see the chastisement" is the object of the verb, "could see"; and "that the power is wholly Allah's and that Allah is severe in chastisement" are the explanatory phrases ."describing "the chastisement" (in the phrase "when they see the chastisement

(Wa-law وَلَوْ)

would that; O that; if only; I wish) is an optative particle, used to express wish. The = verse therefore means: Would that those who are unjust could see in this world the day when they would see the chastisement; then they would see that the power belongs wholly to Allah, and that they had committed the greatest blunder when they ascribed some of that power to their false deities, and that Allah is severe in .chastisement and in punishing those who are guilty of this unforgiveable sin

As the next verses show, the chastisement would contain of their seeing their blunder in taking other objects of worship besides Allah, and in their wrong assumption that those objects had any power, and then seeing the punishment of their polytheism and .misdeed

The next two verses support this interpretation: "When those who were followed shall renounce those who followed (them)." The followers will not get any hoped-for benefit from their leaders; "and they see the chastisement and their ties are cut ."asunder

Nothing shall have any power or effect besides Allah. "And those who followed shall say: 'O were there for us a return:' " they shall ardently wish to return to this world. "then we would renounce" these objects of worship whom we took as equals to Allah, .and whom we followed, in this world, "as they have renounced us" in the next world

Thus will Allah show" those who were unjust and took others as equals to Allah, "their" deeds" (i.e., their love

and obedience to those leaders whom they took as equals to Allah) "to be intense .”regret to them, and they shall not come forth from the fire

Qur’an: and they shall not come forth from the fire: It is a proof against those who say .that the chastisement of the fire shall one day come to an end

Traditions

Shurayh ibn Hani said: "A Bedouin went on the day of the Camel to the Leader of the faithful ('Ali, a.s.) and said: 'O Leader of the faithful! Do you say that Allah is one?' " :(Shurayh) said: "Then the people bore down on him and said

O Arab! Don't you see how preoccupied the Leader of the faithful is?' But the Leader' of the faithful said: 'Let him be. Because what (this) Bedouin wants (i.e., gnosis of Allah) :(is the very thing which we want from these people (i.e., the enemies

Then he (Ali, a.s.) said: 'O Arab! The sentence, "Allah is one", may be interpreted in four .ways, two of them are not permissible for Allah and two are allowed

:The two meanings which are not permissible for Allah are

The saying of a sayer "one", when he uses it as a number: It is not permissible, (١) because that which has no second (i.e., is unique) does not come within the domain of number. Do you not see that (Allah) has declared him an unbeliever who said that God ?was the third of the three

And the saying of a sayer that "He is one (٢)

of the people", in the same sense as a species is one of (its) genes. This (also) is not allowed because it likens Allah (to other things), and our Lord is too great for, and far .(above of, this (likening

:And as for the two meanings which are applicable to Him, they are

The saying of a sayer, "He is one, there is nothing like unto Him"; such (indeed) is (١) .our Lord

And the saying of a sayer that, He, the Mighty, the Great, is unique in significance, (٢) that is, He is not divisible - neither in existence, nor in thought or imagination; such ((indeed) is our Lord.' " (al-Khisal; at-Tawhid; Ma'ani 'l-akhbar

The author says: The two meanings confirmed by him ('Ali, a.s.) conform with what ...we have written in the explanation of the verse: And your God is one God

The lectures narrated from 'Ali (a.s.), ar-Rida (a.s.) and other Imams of the Ahlu 'l-bayt (a.s.) repeatedly say that 'He is one not by number'. It refers to His pristine person .which does not accept counting

There is in a prayer of as-Sahifah as-Sajjadiyyah, the sentence, "Thine is the oneness of number". It is interpreted as to refer to "ownership", that is, 'Thou art the owner of the oneness of number'; it does not meant that

Thou art one in number', because reason as well as the Qur'an and the traditions' firmly prove that His existence is Unique and pure, it is not duplicable nor can it be repeated - according to

.His person and reality

Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) said in a tradition, inter alia, about the words of Allah, And there are some among men who take for them-selves equals besides Allah...: "O Jabir! They are, by Allah!, the leaders of the unjust ones and their followers" (al-Kafi; al-Ikhtisas; al-'Ayyashi). In the last-named book the wording is: "O Jabir! By Allah! They are the ".leaders of the injustice and their followers

The author says: Its meaning is clear in the light of the explanation given above. Why did the Imam refer to them as "the leaders of injustice"? It is because Allah has said: O that those who are unjust could see... Thus, the followers who took for themselves equals besides Allah were "unjust"; therefore, their leaders must be "the leaders of ."the unjust ones" and "the leaders of injustice

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allah, Thus will Allah show them their deeds to be intense regret to them: "He is a man who leaves (untouched) his wealth and because of avarice does not spend it in the obedience of Allah; then he dies and .leaves it to someone who uses it in the obedience of Allah, or in His disobedience

If he (the heir) used it in the obedience of Allah, (the legator) shall see it in the "balance" of another man, and he shall look at it in intense regret, as the wealth had (originally) belonged to him. And if he (the heir) used it in disobedience of Allah, then it

was he (the legator) who strengthened him with that wealth so that he used it in the disobedience of Allah." (al-Kafi)

The author says: This meaning has been narrated by al-'Ayyashi, as-Saduq, al-Mufid and at-Tabrasi, from al-Baqir and as-Sadiq (a.s.). It has used the word, equals, in a wider sense; and as we have explained earlier, this expanded meaning is with-out any doubt, quite in place.

A Philosophical Discourse on Love

Love is one of our emotional feelings; we apply it for the love of food, love of women, love of wealth, love of honour and love of knowledge. We have no doubt that we have these five loves.

Also, there is no doubt that when we use the word, love, in the above contexts, we intend the same meaning everywhere; and not only the word, but the meaning also is the same in all the five phrases. At the same time, we know that these contexts are different. The question is: Is this a difference of categories, or of some other type?

Let us look at the love of food. We love an edible thing, like a fruit, because it is related to the activity of our faculty of nutrition. If there were no such faculty, if there were not that nourishment which perfects our body, we would not have loved that fruit, and there would have been no such love.

Therefore, the love exists, in reality, between the faculty of nutrition and its activity, on one side, and the satisfaction which that faculty gets from that activity,

on the other side. When we say, "satisfaction", we do not mean the satisfying taste which one feels when eating - because the sense of taste is a functionary of the faculty of nutrition, and not the faculty itself. We actually mean that particular .pleasure which the faculty gets from its activity

Likewise, if we look at the love of women, we find that that love is related in reality and primarily to cohabitation, and only secondarily to the women, as its concomitant - in the same way as the love of food was related to a particular food just secondarily .and only as a concomitant

Cohabitation is the effect of a faculty given to animals, in the same way as eating food is the effect of a faculty given to them. Evidently, these two loves belong to the same root, that is, a subsistent relationship between these two faculties and their activities .- in other words their active perfection

At this stage, it might possibly be thought that love was an attachment exclusively reserved for the above two faculties, that it was not found in other contexts. But .experiment (through various effects) removes this misunderstanding

This attachment, known as love, has an effect on the lover. The lover moves towards the object of his/its love, and yearns for the loved action if he/it is separated from it, .and does not like to leave it, after he/it has found it

This particular effect of love is found in all our powers of conception and their

actions. All our powers and faculties like eye-sight, hearing, memory and imagination - in short all our internal and external senses - have this very effect, this very attribute, no matter whether they are acting or reacting. Each of these faculties loves .its activity and is attracted to it

And it is only because its activity is its perfection, makes up its deficiency, and fulfils its natural need. In this way, we know the significance of the love of wealth, love of power and love of knowledge. Man seeks his perfection through his wealth, honour .and knowledge

It may be inferred from it that love is a special emotional attachment, a particular conscious attraction between man and his perfection. Detailed researches have .shown that it is found in animals too

And it is because the lover acts upon, and reacts to, his loved activity; then that love extends to the things related to that activity, as the love of eating was extended to that of fruit. This principle would apply also to other things besides animals, provided .they could consciously seek or bestow perfection

From another point of view, as love is a subsistent relation-ship between the lover and the loved, there exists a positive connection between them. Now, if an effect (which has the relation of love with its cause) is a conscious being and has got sense and feeling, it would find that love within its soul - if it has a soul and independent .existence

The above discourse leads us to the

-:following conclusions

First: Love is a subsistent relationship, a special attraction between perfecting cause (or things like that) and perfection-seeking effect (or things like that). That is why we .love our actions, because through them we seek perfection

And as its extension, we love the things related to our activities; for example, food which we take, mate with whom we cohabit, wealth which we use, honour from which we gain benefit, a benefactor who bestows something on us, a teacher who teaches us, a leader who guides us, a helper who helps us, a student who learns from us, a servant who serves us, a follower who obeys and follows us. All these are various manifestations of love, some of them are physical, some imaginary and some others .intellectual

Second: Love has different degrees of strength and weakness, because it is a subsistent attraction, an existing attachment - and there are such degrees even in existence itself. Obviously, the attachment between a sufficient cause and its effect .cannot be like the one existing between an insufficient cause and its effect

Also, the perfection (because of which the attachment of love comes into being) is itself of various categories, some of it essential, some others inessential, some of it .(material (like nourishment), others immaterial (like knowledge

It shows the invalidity of the theory which says that love is exclusively reserved for material things. (Some of them said that love was basically related to food only, and other loves issued forth from it; some others gave that

central place to the love of sexual intercourse; according to them all other loves (.branched out from it

Third: Allah deserves to be loved - from whatever angle you look at it. Allah is Self-subsistent, exists by Himself; His perfection is limitless while all other perfections are .but limited. A limited thing attaches itself to the limitless one in existence

This attachment, this love, is a part of existence, a part of personality; it can never diminish or go away. Moreover, Allah has created us, and bestows on us countless and limitless favours; that is why we love Him, as every bestower of bounties is loved .for his favours

Fourth: As mentioned in the beginning, love is subsistent and existing relationship. Such relations are not separate from the very existence of their subjects. It follows that every thing loves its own person. Also, it was mentioned that by its extension, we love the things related to the loved - therefore, every thing loves the effects of its own .existence

It is clear from the above that Allah loves His creation because of His love of His Own Self; and He loves His creation because they are recipients of His favours; and He .loves His creation because they accept His guidance

Fifth: We said earlier that sense, consciousness and know-ledge are concomitants of love. But it is necessary in practice only, Otherwise, the subsistent attachment - which is the reality of love - does not depend, per se, on these factors. It appears from this that

even the natural powers and faculties – which have no sense or feeling – love their .own actions and effects

.Sixth: It follows that love is a reality which permeates all the existing things

Another Philosophical Discourse on Perpetuity of Punishment

The question arises: Will the chastisement of the Hell come to its end at some time, or will it continue endlessly? Both theories have their adherents and both groups support their views with intellectual reasoning and apparent meanings of the Qur'an and .traditions

As for the Qur'an, it unambiguously declares that many groups shall abide for ever – :endlessly and perpetually – in the Hell. As Allah says

.(and they shall not come forth from the fire (۲:۱۶۷

And nearly mutawatir traditions narrated from the Imams of the Ahlu 'l-bayt (a.s.) clearly say the same thing. Of course, there are some traditions emanating from other sources which support the view that the chastisement will end. But these traditions must be rejected outright because they are against the clear declarations of the .Qur'an

:Now, we come to intellectual reasons. As we said under the verse

,(And be on your guard against the day when one soul shall not avail another... (۲:۴۸

it is not possible to explain the details concerning the Resurrection and the Judgment with the help of intellectual deductions, because our reason lacks the premises .necessary to lead to a conclusion

The only way is to believe in what the Truthful Prophet (S) has brought to us through .Divine Revelation – because his truth has been proved without any doubt

As for the spiritual bliss

and chastisement, they happen to the immaterial soul as it acquires good or bad characteristics and traits and is thus wrapped in beautiful or ugly conditions. We have mentioned there(۱)* that these conditions and characteristics appear to the psyche in their respective good or ugly shapes, and the psyche enjoys the beautiful and good shapes, if it is itself good; and is tormented by what is bad and ugly, whether it is itself .good or bad

If these resulting shapes are not deeply imprinted on the psyche, and are not agreeable to its person, they are bound to disappear sooner or later, because their appearance is a matter of constraint; and we know that constraint does not continue .for ever

Suppose there is a true believer who has committed some sins. This man is good and happy in his person, but his psyche has been polluted by, and wrapped in, ugly unhappy shapes. Obviously this ugly shape, not being deeply imprinted will certainly .get removed

But if these ugly shapes have been deeply imprinted on the psyche, then it reshapes the psyche in its own mould. The soul acquires a new shape and becomes almost a new species. Suppose there is a "niggard man"; now niggardliness gives a new form to his humanity, in the same way as "rationality" gives a new form to "animality ", and "rational animal" (i.e., man) becomes a new species under the genes, "animal". ."Likewise "niggard man" becomes a new species under the genes "man

This species has an

(.See al-Mizan (Eng. transl.), vol.۱, pp.۲۶۱-۲. (tr -۱

eternal existence of its own. The man, before the characteristics of niggardliness were firmly ingrained in his psyche, did practise niggardliness under constraint and felt unhappy. But now he does it, by permission of Allah, naturally without any constraint. And as it is done by this new species without constraint, it is eternal, endless and perpetual - contrary to the former condition when it was done under constraint and could therefore be got rid of. This man gets punished because of the .concomitants of his characteristics and traits

We may compare his case with that of a man suffering from chronic melancholia or hallucination. His mind perceives frightening nightmares and he is always tortured by it - although it is he himself who produces these fantasies without any extraneous .constraint or compulsion

The pictures appearing in his mind are not agreeable to his sick psyche, and he is .tortured by it, although it is he himself who has created them

Yet, as we know, he suffers because of it. What is punishment? It is that from which man runs away (if not inflicted by it yet) and longs to extricate himself (if already .(suffering from it

And this definition applies to the ugly shapes and frightening conditions which an "unhappy" man suffers in his next abode. It proves that the chastisement of the next world is perpetual and never-ending - for a man whose unhappiness has become an .integral part of his personality

Many objections have been raised against perpetuity of chastisement, all of them

:clearly without a leg to stand upon

First Objection: Allah's mercy is limitless, all-encompassing. How can He, in His mercy, create someone whose destination would be a perpetual chastisement which no one ?could bear

Second Objection: Punishment is punishment when it is not agreeable to the nature of the convicted person. In other words when it is a compulsion, a constraint. And perpetual constraint is unthinkable. Therefore, it is wrong to say that there would be .perpetual punishment

Third Objection: The man had committed sins which were not perpetual; they came to their end after a short or long duration. How can he be requited with a perpetual ?never-ending punishment

Fourth Objection: Even the evil-doers serve the system of creation no less than the good-doers. If they were not there, the virtue of good people could not come about. ?This being the case, why should they be thrown into perpetual punishment

Fifth Objection: It is a revenge to punish someone who disobeys the commandments of Allah. As a rule revenge is taken be-cause the unjust and disobedient person makes the wronged party

suffer some loss; and that party, if powerful enough, avenges itself to make up that .loss

But this rule cannot apply to Allah, because He is Self-sufficient and nobody can inflict any harm or loss upon Him. In this background, how can He punish anyone - and ?especially with a perpetual punishment

There are other similar objections against the perpetuity of punishment. If you ponder on what we have written earlier explaining the meaning of the

perpetuity of punishment, you will realize that these objections are completely wide :of mark

General Reply: Perpetual punishment is the effect of the form of infelicity and unhappiness when it becomes an inseparable characteristic of the "unhappy" man. It happens after the man acquires full capability for it - through relevant conditions of .the psyche - and exercises his free choice by choosing evil, instead of good

.That capability creates in the psyche the shape commensurate with it

We do not ask why a man does human actions, once the matter has acquired the human form - because the human form itself is sufficient cause of human activities. Like-wise, we cannot ask why the effects of the inseparable unhappiness and infelicity (including perpetual punishment) are appearing, after the psyche has .acquired the form of inseparable unhappiness and infelicity

Because it is its inseparable characteristic and effect. This general reply sufficiently ...:refutes all the objections. Now let us look at each objection separately

Reply to the First Objection: When we say "mercy of Allah" we do not refer to any softness of heart, mildness of temper or other such psychological effects, because .such mercy presupposes material existence, and Allah is far above such insinuations

Divine Mercy means bestowing on the recipient all things which he is fully qualified for. A fully qualified person longs for the things he is qualified for; and his qualification itself becomes a constant demand for it as if it had a tongue of its own. And Allah gives him what he thus

.demands and asks for

His Mercy is of two kinds: general and particular. The general mercy gives whatever a person is qualified for in the framework of existence. The particular mercy bestows whatever a person is qualified for in the highway that leads towards monotheism and .bliss of Allah's Nearness

When Allah gives the form of inseparable "unhappiness" to a person who is fully qualified for it, it is not against the general mercy; it is rather a part of that mercy. And perpetual punishment is a compulsory result of that form. As for the particular mercy, .it does not cover the person who is not proceeding on the highway of guidance

Now let us look at the claim that perpetual punishment is against the Divine Mercy. If by "mercy" they refer to the general mercy, then surely it is not against it - it is rather a part of the general mercy. And if they mean the particular mercy, then the claim is .untenable, because this case is out of the jurisdiction of the particular mercy

Moreover, this objection, if sustainable, could also be laid against intermittent .punishment. Nay, it would invalidate punishments of this world too

Reply to the Second Objection: First we should decide why a thing is disagreeable to the nature. A thing or condition may be disagreeable to a man because there is no common factor between the man and that thing or condition. This indeed is a constraint, and it happens because of compulsion by an extraneous agent; and

.goes away as soon as that constraint is removed

There is, on the other hand, an action or condition which emanates from the very nature of the man, when that nature is thoroughly polluted, when it is moulded in ugly .mould and ac-quires a shape other than the original one

Man, in that existence, demands terrifying punishment; his transformed psyche, by its very nature, longs for chastisement - although at the same time he does not like it. :We have earlier given the example of the man suffering from melancholia

Doubtlessly, the terrifying pictures emanating from his mind are "agreeable" to his psyche, because they are the products of that distorted psyche itself, and such .effects are surely agreeable to the related psyche or nature

But at the same time they are indeed torture and punishment, because the definition of "punishment" applies thereto. In short, the eternal punishment is disagreeable from the viewpoint of sensitivity, and at the same time it is agreeable because it .emanates from the psyche itself

Reply to the Third Objection: The punishment is not the result of the sin and disobedience which were limited and came to an end. It is the effect of the perpetual ugly shape to which the man's psyche was moulded as a result of those limited and .counted sins

There is no question here of a limited cause bringing about an unlimited effect - which, of course, is impossible. As an example, look at the man himself; there were a lot of limited causes which ultimately

moulded the matter into human form; now he acts and reacts as a human being, .because of that human form

And that humanity continues for ever, even after his death. We cannot ask about this man, as to how did a set of limited causes bring into being those unlimited and unending effects – because their efficient cause exists with them for ever. Likewise, it cannot be asked how can a set of limited sins bring about perpetual limitless .chastisement

Reply to the Fourth Objection: Service and worship, like mercy, is of two kinds: general and particular. General service is to submit to the Source of existence, that is, God, in .the affairs and conditions of existence

Particular service is to submit to God and obey Him, in the path that leads to monotheism. Each type of service and obedience has a reward of its own, a mercy .most suitable to it

Obviously, the general service in the system of creation is rewarded by general mercy – and as explained earlier, eternal bliss and eternal chastisement both are parts of that mercy. And the particular service is rewarded by the particular mercy, that is, .bounties of the Paradise

Moreover, if this objection is recognized as valid, then it would also negate the limited .chastisement of the Hell and even punishments of this world too

Reply to the Fifth Objection: As you have seen, the perpetual chastisement is ascribed to the shape of unhappiness acquired by man; and to Allah in the sense in which every existing

thing is attributed to Him. That punishment is not attributed to Him in the meaning of revenge and satisfaction of the feeling of rage and anger, because such thing is .impossible for Allah

Of course, one of the names used for Allah is “the Avenger”. But it is used in the sense that Allah requites severely His servant when he (the servant) transgresses the limits of servitude and crosses the boundary of obedience going into that of revolt and .disobedience

Revenge” in this meaning is not impossible for Allah; and the perpetual punishment“ .may be called “revenge” in this sense, without any difficulty

Moreover, this objection, if tenable, may be laid against terminable punishment also; .and even against the worldly punishments

A Qur’anic Note on the Above Subject

It should be noted here that this method of argument, which we have used against the above-mentioned objections, has been used also in the Qur'an and traditions. :Allah says

Whoever desires this present life, We hasten to him therein what We please for whomsoever We desire, then We assign to him the hell; he shall enter it despised, driven away. And whoever desires the hereafter and strives for it as he ought to strive and he is a believer; (as for) these, their striving shall be thanked. All do we aid - these as well as those - out of the bounty of your Lord, and the bounty of your Lord is not .(confined (۱۷:۱۸-۲۰

As you see, the verses count both chastisement and good recompense as parts of the ;bounty and mercy of Allah

and it is made clear that whatever happens, it is related to the will, desire and striving .of the servant himself

It is this very method that we have used in explaining the main topic and replying to the objections. There are many other verses of this connotation; and we shall write .on them in their proper places, Allah willing

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۱۶۸ – ۱۷۱

point

(۱۶۸) يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ كُلُواْ مِمَّا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ حَلَـٰلًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُواْ خُطُوَٰتِ ٱلشَّيْطَـٰنِ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

(۱۶۹) إِنَّمَا يَأْمُرُكُم بِٱلسُّوٓءِ وَٱلْفَحْشَآءِ وَأَن تَقُولُواْ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

(۱۷۰) وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ ٱتَّبِعُواْ مَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ قَالُواْ بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَآ أَلْفَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ ءَابَآءَنَآ ۗ أَوَلَوْ كَانَ ءَابَآؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ شَيْـًٔا وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ

(۱۷۱) وَمَثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ كَمَثَلِ ٱلَّذِى يَنْعِقُ بِمَا لَا يَسْمَعُ إِلَّا دُعَآءً وَنِدَآءً ۚ صُمٌّ بُكْمٌ عُمْىٌ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ

O men! eat the lawful (and) good things out of what is in the earth, and do not follow the footsteps of the Satan, surely he is your open enemy (۱۶۸).

He only enjoins you evil and indecency, and that you may speak against Allah what you do not know (۱۶۹).

And when it is said to them: "Follow what Allah has revealed," they say: "Nay! we follow what we found our fathers upon." What! and though their fathers had no sense at all, nor did they follow the right way (۱۷۰).

And the parable of those who disbelieve is as the parable of one who calls out to that which hears no more than a call and cry; deaf, dumb (and) blind, so

.(they do not understand (١٧١

Commentary

Qur'an: O men! eat the lawful (and) good things out of what is in the earth... what you forbidden); al-hill,= (اَلحَرَام ُ lawful) is opposite of al-haram = (اَلحَلاَل ُ do not know: al-Halal = (اَلحَرَم ُ prohibition), al-haram = (اَلحُرْمَـــه ُ is used as opposite of al-hurmah (اَلحِلُّ) .(to tie = (العَقْدُ to untie) is opposite of al-'aqd = (اَلحَل ُّ sanctuary); while al-hall

All these usages of al-hill allude to freedom of a thing in its action and effect. at-bad, evil), and basically means = (الخَبِيْثُ good) is opposite of al-khabith = (الطـَّيِّبُ Tayyib "agreeable"; a good speech is that which is agreeable to the hearing; a good perfume is agreeable to the sense of smelling; a good place or house is agreeable to the .people residing therein

step, pace, stride). Some = (الخُطْـــوَةُ is plural of al-khutwah (الخُـــطـُوَاتُ) al-Khutuwat = (الخَطْوَة ُ which is plural of al-khatwah (الخَطـَوَاتُ) reciters have read it as al-khatawat .(one step

The phrase, "the footsteps of the Satan" refers to things leading to the Satanic aim, as footsteps lead to the walker's aim and destination. The Satan's aim is to mislead with polytheism; therefore, his footsteps are the things which lead to polytheism, and take .the walker away from Allah

to enjoin); the enjoiner imposes his own will on the enjoined, so that the = (اَلأمْرُ al-Amr latter does what the former wants. The Satan enjoins and

orders by devilish insinuations and temptations encouraging man to do what the evil) refers to the thing or action which is repugnant and = (اَلسُّوءُ 'Satan wants. as-Su .repulsive to society

indecency); it is a masdar = (الفَحْشَآءُ 'When it exceeds that limit, it becomes al-fahsha adversity; = (الضَّرَّآءُ 'prosperity; happiness) and ad-Darra = (السَّرَّآءُ 'like as-sarra .(distress

Allah has addressed these verses to all the men in general, because the order promulgated therein concerns all. As for the polytheists, they followed some self-imposed taboo, and falsely ascribed its promulgation to Allah.

It is reported, for example, that the tribes of Thaqif, Khuza'ah, Banu 'Amir ibn Sa'sa'ah and Banu Madlaj had forbidden themselves certain things of tilth and cattle, as well as some categories of camels, forging a lie against Allah. Similar baseless taboos are found in other countries and societies too.

Coming to the believers, there was a possibility that even after accepting Islam, some myths and superstitions might continue in their society, because of hereditary influence and national tradition. As a matter of fact, every new spiritual or temporal system concentrates in the beginning on eradicating and destroying the roots of the old system.

After it is done, and if by that time it is left with some vitality and vigour - by good training and learning - then it starts mopping up operation by obliterating and erasing the remnants of that old system. Otherwise, the residue of that system is mixed with the new one, and the resulting

.mixture becomes a hybrid – neither this nor that

Allah ordered the people to eat from what is in the earth. To eat is to swallow after chewing. Sometimes the word "eating" is allegorically used for general usufruct of a property, for unrestricted right of its disposal, because eating is the basic activity of :man, the main pillar of his life. For example, Allah says

do not swallow up your property among yourselves by wrongful means, except that ... .(it be trading by your mutual consent... (۴:۲۹

The verse under discussion may easily be interpreted in this wider sense, because it is :general, not restricted. It would therefore mean

Eat, make use of, and enjoy the usufruct of the bounties of Allah that are in the earth, and which the earth has prepared and kept in store for you by permission of Allah; and it should be in a lawful and proper way. But you should see that there is no snag or hindrance in eating or using it, either from your own nature or from the nature of .the earth

For example, there are some things which by their nature cannot be eaten; there are others which man by his nature does not want to eat; and lastly there are things which are eatable and useable, but your own nature rejects them and does not want .to touch them at all, for example, a food that was obtained by unlawful means

Thus, the words of Allah, "eat the lawful (and) good things out of what

is in the earth", promulgate general permission of eating all the lawful and good things .of the earth, without any condition, without any restriction

But the next sentence, "and do not follow the footsteps of the Satan", shows that there are some things (related to this lawful and good eating) which are called "the ."footsteps of the Satan

They are of two categories: either refraining from some food as a result of following the Satan, or eating it for the same reason. Thereafter, Allah mentions a general principle applicable to all that is done for following the Satan, that it is evil and .indecency, as well as speaking against Allah what one does not know

Desisting from a food is not allowed except when Allah is pleased with such abstaining; like-wise one should not audaciously use any thing without the per-mission of Allah. Eating out of what is in the earth is not lawful and good unless Allah .permits and allows it

And He has allowed it in this and similar verses. Also, one should ascertain that a par-:ticular thing is not forbidden or prohibited by Allah, as He says after a few verses

.(He has only forbidden you what dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine... (۲:۱۷۳

The meaning of the verse then would be as follows, and Allah knows better: Eat out of what is in the earth, from the bounties of Allah which He has created for you, as He has made them lawful and good for you; and do not

leave some of them abstaining from them, because that would be evil and indecency, and you would be guilty of speaking against Allah what you do not know; it would be tantamount to making your own law against the law of Allah; and you would thus be .following the footsteps of the Satan

:The verse thus shows that

First: Man has been given a general permission for unrestricted use of all that is in the earth – except the things excluded from this general rule by other proofs. Allah may .forbid a thing as easily as He permits it

Second: One who abstains, without any reasonable proof, from that which Allah has .made lawful, in fact promulgates his own law – which he is forbidden to do

Third: Following the footsteps of the Satan means worshipping Allah in a way Allah has not allowed, by a method He has not approved. Allah has not forbidden any walking except that in which man puts his foot in the footsteps of the Satan, making his walk conform with that of the Satan; thus he would be following the Satan's .footsteps

It may be inferred from above that, although the reason given of this prohibition (He only enjoins you evil and indecency…) demands that man should neither proceed to do any thing without knowledge, nor refrain from any thing without knowledge; but this is not what this verse is meant for; because it is not following the footsteps of the .Satan, though it is following the Satan

Qur’an: He

only enjoins you evil and indecency, and that you may speak against Allah what you do not know: Evil and indecency are attributes of action, vis-à-vis, speech. It shows that what the Satan enjoins is confined to the action that is evil and indecency, and .the word that is spoken without knowledge

Qur'an: And when it is said to them, "Follow what Allah has revealed," they say: "Nay! to find). The verse = (اَلإِلـ ـْفـ ـاَ آءُ 'we follow what we found our fathers upon": al-Ilfa supports what we have inferred from the preceding verse, regarding the footsteps of .the Satan

Qur'an: What! and though their fathers had no sense at all, nor did they follow the right way: It is rebuttal of their saying; it shows that they speak without knowledge .and without ascertaining the truth; and it is a thing which reason rejects

They say, "We follow what we found our fathers upon." It is an unconditional declaration - they intend to follow their fathers in all conditions, without looking at .their qualifications and credentials

They are determined to follow their fathers even if they had no sense, even if they had gone astray. They claimed that whatever their fathers did was correct. But such claim, such declaration, is just a talk without knowing; it leads one to say what no .sensible person would ever say - if his attention was drawn to its absurdity

There would be no blame on them if they followed their fathers only in those things which they (the

fathers) had knowledge of, and concerning which they followed the right way; if they followed them in such things knowing well that their fathers had their knowledge and .had been on right way, it would not be counted as following without knowledge

It shows that the phrase, "What! and though their fathers had no sense at all, nor did they follow the right way," is not intended as an exaggeration, although one may think that negation of all sense and knowledge from their fathers - who certainly knew .many things concerning their life and livelihood - was intended as an exaggeration

But it is not so. Actually, the verse exposes the absurdity of their unconditional .declaration by pointing out a situation in which no one would allow the following

Qur'an: And the parable of those who disbelieve is as the parable of one who calls out to that which hears no more than a call and cry: al-Mathal (اَلمَثــَلُ) = proverb; parable, adage); also it is used for attribute and comparison, as Allah says:

See how they coin comparisons for thee. So they have gone astray, therefore they shall not be able to find a way (۲۵:۹).

an-Na'iq (اَلن ـَّعِيـقُ) = admonishing cry of a shepherd to his sheep'); an-nida (اَلـن ـِّدَآءُ) = to call) is masdar of nada, yunadi, munadatan (ن ـَادى ، يُنَـادِى، مُنَادَاةً = he called, he calls, to call), because an-nida' is reserved (الـدُّعآءُ) = 'call); it is more particular than ad-du'a for calling in a loud voice,

.while ad-du'a' is general

The meaning of the verse is as follows, and Allah knows better: And O Prophet! your parable, when you call the unbelievers to the truth, is like a man who calls out to the animals while the animals do not understand what he says, except that they hear a call and cry, and stop in their tracks as soon as they hear it without understanding any .thing spoken

The unbelievers are, therefore, deaf, they do not hear any talk which would benefit them; dumb, not speaking any sensible word; blind, not seeing any worthwhile thing. Thus they do not understand any thing, because their windows of understanding are .closed shut

It appears that there is a sort of reversal in this parable. Although it begins as a parable of those who disbelieve, it changes to describe the shepherd, the caller to guidance; it is in fact the likeness of the Prophet not of those who were being called by .him to the right path

But as the three adjectives deducted from it (deaf, dumb [and] blind, so they do not understand,) were attributes of the disbelievers - not of him who was calling them to the truth - it was highly appropriate to ascribe the parable to the disbelievers, and not .to the Messenger of Allah (S). Thus, there appears to be a reversal in the parable

Traditions

Abdu 'r-Rahman says: "I asked Abu 'Abdillah about a man who vowed to slaughter his' child. He said: 'That is from the footsteps of

(the Satan.' " (at-Tahdhib

Mansur ibn Hazim said: "Abu Abdillah (a.s.) said to me: 'Have not you heard about Tariq? Verily, Tariq was a cattle-dealer in Medina. He came to Abu Ja'far and said: "O Abu Ja'far! I have taken an oath by divorce (of my wives), emancipation (of my slaves) and vow." Thereupon, (Abu Ja'far, a.s.) said to Him: "O Tariq! verily this is from the " ' ".footsteps of the Satan

Abu Ja'far (a.s.) said: "Every oath taken in the name of other than Allah, is from the (footsteps of the Satan." (al-'Ayyashi

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "When a man takes oath for not doing a thing - while what he has sworn against, its doing is better than its leaving - then he should do that which is better; and there is no penalty on him; surely it (i.e., such oath) is only from the (footsteps of the Satan." (al-Kafi

The author says: The traditions, as you see, interpret the footsteps of the Satan as the deeds supposed to bring one nearer to Allah, while in fact they are not so, .because the shari'ah does not recognize them - as we have explained above

Of course, as for the divorce, etc. (mentioned in the second tradition), there is an additional reason for the invalidity of such oaths; and that is making it conditional on some contingency in future; and it is against the principle of immediate and .unconditional effecting of such transactions

It is a topic of jurisprudence.) Oath in the name)

of other than Allah refers to an oath which has no validity in the shari'ah, and to .swearing by what Allah has not sworn by and to which He has given no excellence

al-Baqir (a.s.) said about the words of Allah, And the parable of those who disbelieve is as the parable of one who calls out...: "That is, their likeness when you call them to the faith is like the caller who calls out to the cattle which understands nothing other than ".hearing a voice

A Moral and Sociological Discourse on Blind Imitation

Opinions and beliefs are of two kinds, which we shall call theoretical and practical knowledges. The theoretical knowledge is the one not directly related to action, for .example, theorems of geometry, propositions of physics and issues of metaphysics

Practical knowledge, on the other hand, is directly related to action, for example, the .moral teachings concerned with what to do and what not to do

The only way to acquire the theoretical knowledge is through rational proofs or the senses. The only way to get the practical knowledge is to follow that which leads to .man's felicity, and to refrain from that which leads to infelicity or hinders the felicity

Apart from that, it is merely a superstition to believe in what is not known to be the truth and fact (in theoretical knowledge) and what is not known to be good or evil (in .(practical knowledge

Man, when left to his pristine nature, does not accept superstitious ideas based on blindness and ignorance. His opinions are based on the demands

of nature which wants him to find out the causes of the things, and exhorts him to .strive for real perfection

But sometimes his sentiments and feelings aroused by imagination - and especially the fear and the hope - make him to believe in myths and superstitions. What happens is this: Imagination creates some images in his mind which produce fear or .hope

That feeling of fear or hope then preserves that image and does not let the psyche forget it. Let us say, a man finds himself in a valley; he is alone and the moonless night .is pitch-dark; he cannot see his own hands

He has no light to illuminate his surroundings, no companion to share his thoughts with. Then his imagination takes hold of him. Every formless figure appears to him as .a fearful ugly ghost intent on putting him to death

Then he sees the ghouls moving, coming and going ascending to the skies and descending to the earth. The imagination keeps producing these figures and he .remains awake, frightened out of his wits

Later on, he describes that horrifying experience to someone, graphically describing the devilish antics of those ghosts and ghouls, and the hearer stands aghast, his eye askance. In this way the 'belief' in these things spreads - while in fact it is just an .imaginary “thing” having no reality at all

Sometimes this superstition reawakens the instinct of self-defence in man, and he devises some rites to ward off the harmful effects of this imaginary ”being”; and exhorts

others to do like-wise, so that they too would be safe. Thus, a superstitious rite takes .root in the society and grows

Man, from the earliest days of his existence, has remained in the tight grip of myths and superstitions; and the situation is not different even today. And it is not confined to the eastern nations - as many people think. It is prevalent among westerners in .equal, if not greater, degree

The elite group, that is, the scholars, have been trying, since time immemorial, to eradicate the rites and ceremonials arising from deep-rooted superstitions which have kept the common people enthralled. They try to awaken the public to the reality .- but to no avail

It is because man has never been able to free himself from following the others in theoretical views and real knowledge on one side, and sentiments and feelings on the other. We can see that the treatment has not been successful, and the situation goes .from bad to worse

The most astonishing is the myth prevalent today among the scientists and sociologists. They say that the foundation of modern science is laid on the senses and experiment; it rejects every thing that is not perceivable through the senses and .which cannot be experimented upon

Also, according to them, the civilization is based on the urge of perfection; it seeks .perfection in every possible direction, as much as it can

But strangely enough, this view itself is a myth which they are following. The natural sciences look only at the

factors and faculties of the nature. In other words, these material sciences search .only for the hitherto unknown peculiarities of the matter

So far as the things beyond matter are concerned, these material sciences have no way to reject or refute them - as they are beyond their scope, outside their jurisdiction. As such it is a clear superstition and myth to reject metaphysical and immaterial things - just because the material sciences (which admittedly cannot see beyond matter) have not been able to see those things which are admittedly beyond .the reach of matter

Likewise, it is another myth to base the civilization on the above-mentioned urge of perfection of the society. This perfection of society, this felicity of civilization, often .demands sacrifices from its members

It becomes necessary for some people to offer their individual happiness on the altar of the society; they lose their all, including the lives, in defence of their country or their cause; an individual is thus deprived of his happiness and his life in order that the .society may be saved

Obviously, no man will voluntarily accept these personal privations unless he believes in this pursuit of society's perfection, and unless he looks at that sacrifice itself as a personal perfection. But that sacrifice is not a perfection for himself - it is a nullity, a .deprivation

Of course, it may be a perfection - if we accept it as such - for the society, per se, not for himself. But man had invented society as an instrument

for his own benefit; he had not bargained that the role would be reversed and he would be used as a tool for the society's benefit.

It is to overcome this basic difficulty that the societies have invented some myths. They say to their members that man by sacrificing himself in the way of the society earns eternity because his good name is always remembered with reverence and affection - and man should strive for that eternal life. But evidently it is nothing but a story, a myth.

Where is this supposed life once the man is dead? There is nothing for him except death and oblivion. But the society says, it is life - merely a name without any substance!

Also, they say: It is necessary for man to obey the laws even if they are tough and irksome to him. He should patiently bear the loss of some of his happiness, some of the things he earnestly desires, in order that the society may prosper, the civilization may attain its perfection.

In this way, that partial deprivation will lead to his own perfection - through the perfection of the society. He is thus made to believe that the perfection of the society is his own perfection. But it is merely a myth.

The perfection of the society may be the man's perfection, when both perfections go hand in hand, when both are one and the same. Otherwise, not.

Why should a man look at society's perfection as his own perfection, and to good remembrance

as his lasting glory; and especially so if he can easily attain to his aims and goals - even if through injustice and oppression - and when his strength and power ?surpasses that of his competitors

The same question may be asked in respect of a powerful nation, vis-à-vis, the others. And it is not just a theoretical question. We see every day how the powerful .nations go on exploiting the weaker ones

These super powers tread on the prone bodies of the weaker peoples, crush their dignity and self-respect, expropriate their natural resources, and put the whole populace under their yoke. (Once it was called imperialism and colonialism, now it is .neo-colonialism

Result in both cases is the same:) weaker people are subjugated and enslaved. (They say they are there to help these people in their difficulties - and in this process they rob them of their freedom and dignity.) They cure a disease by putting the patient to .death

What is the guidance given by the Qur'an in this respect? In theoretical field, it tells man to follow the commandments of Allah and not to speak without knowledge. In practical affairs, it directs him to seek only what is pleasing to Allah: if it tallies with his own desires, then he shall get happiness of both worlds; if it does not agree with it, if he has to sacrifice his own wish for the pleasure of Allah, then he shall get great reward from Allah; and what is with Allah is better

.and everlasting

Also, the materialist say: Belief in religion is a blind following which the science does not allow. Such belief is a remnant of the superstitions of the second of the four .periods through which mankind has passed

There was first the period of mythology, followed by that of religion. Then came the era of philosophy which was replaced by that of science. Presently, we are living in .this era, and it follows the knowledge and rejects myths and superstitions

.Comment: This in itself is a myth. These people talk without knowledge

They have said: "Belief in religion is a blind following." The fact is otherwise. Religion is a composite entity; it consists of the gnosis of the beginning and final destination of man, the laws regulating the rites of worship and social dealings (which are based on revelations brought by the prophets whose truth was definitely proved by rational .proofs), and some information given by the same truthful prophets

Evidently, when one follows the religion he follows the knowledge, because the truth .of the prophet concerned was fully established by proofs

:We have written something on the topic of "following", under the verse

.(Surely Allah commands you that you should sacrifice a cow (۲:۶۷

There is another amusing aspect of this objection. This disparaging condemnation comes from those who have got nothing in their hands except blind imitation and who .uncritically follow their desire, without ascertaining its value

This aping encompasses their whole being, right from their principles of life to the social customs - be it

food or drink, dress or residence, marriage or other social relations. Of course, they have given a new name to this imitation: They say, they have adopted the ways of the .developed nations

Thus the blind following remains firmly-rooted in society, but the name is discarded; the bottle is the same, the label has been changed. The result: “Do as the Romans do” :becomes a scientific adage, a sign of social advancement; and

(do not follow desire, lest it should lead you astray... (۳۸:۲۶

!!is treated as a blind religious following, a superstitious view

They have divided the progress of human species into four stages. But what we definitely know concerning the history of philosophy and religions refutes this division. It is wrong to say that philosophy came after religion. Ibrahim (a.s.) brought his religion long after the rise of philosophy in India, Egypt and Chaldea; and the religion .of 'Isa (a.s.) came after the Greek philosophy

Likewise, the religion of Muhammad (S), that is, Islam, was promulgated after the philosophy of Greece and Alexandria. In short, philosophy reached its zenith long before the rise of religion. We have also mentioned earlier that the religion of .monotheism was the first and earliest of all religions and systems

The Qur'an divides the path of human progress in a different way. There were two periods only: First, the period of simplicity when all were of one nation, and then the period when materialism and revolt took its hold. We shall describe it in detail under :the verse

Mankind was

.(but one nation; so Allah sent the prophets... (۲:۲۱۳

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۱۷۲ – ۱۷۶

point

(۱۷۲) يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ كُلُواْ مِن طَيِّبَـٰتِ مَا رَزَقۡنَـٰكُمۡ وَٱشۡكُرُواْ لِلَّهِ إِن كُنتُمۡ إِيَّاهُ تَعۡبُدُونَ

(۱۷۳) إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيۡكُمُ ٱلۡمَيۡتَةَ وَٱلدَّمَ وَلَحۡمَ ٱلۡخِنزِيرِ وَمَآ أُهِلَّ بِهِۦ لِغَيۡرِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ فَمَنِ ٱضۡطُرَّ غَيۡرَ بَاغٖ وَلَا عَادٖ فَلَآ إِثۡمَ عَلَيۡهِ ۚ إِنَّ
ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٞ رَّحِيمٌ

(۱۷۴) إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يَكۡتُمُونَ مَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ مِنَ ٱلۡكِتَـٰبِ وَيَشۡتَرُونَ بِهِۦ ثَمَنٗا قَلِيلًا ۙ أُوْلَـٰٓئِكَ مَا يَأۡكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمۡ إِلَّا ٱلنَّارَ وَلَا
يُكَلِّمُهُمُ ٱللَّهُ يَوۡمَ ٱلۡقِيَـٰمَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمۡ وَلَهُمۡ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

(۱۷۵) أُوْلَـٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱشۡتَرَوُاْ ٱلضَّلَـٰلَةَ بِٱلۡهُدَىٰ وَٱلۡعَذَابَ بِٱلۡمَغۡفِرَةِ ۚ فَمَآ أَصۡبَرَهُمۡ عَلَى ٱلنَّارِ

(۱۷۶) ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ نَزَّلَ ٱلۡكِتَـٰبَ بِٱلۡحَقِّ وَإِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱخۡتَلَفُواْ فِي ٱلۡكِتَـٰبِ لَفِي شِقَاقِۭ بَعِيدٖ

O you who believe! eat of the good things that We have provided you with, and give .(thanks to Allah if Him it is that you worship (۱۷۲

He has only forbidden you what dies of itself, and that over which any other (name) than (that of) Allah has been invoked; but whoever is forced (to it), not revolting, nor .(exceeding the limit, no sin shall be upon him; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful (۱۷۳

Surely those who cancel what Allah has revealed of the Book and take for it a small price, they eat nothing but fire into their bellies, and Allah will not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them, and they shall have a painful .(chastisement (۱۷۴

These are they who have bought error for the guidance, and chastisement for .(forgiveness; Oh! how (bold) they are to endure fire (۱۷۵

This is

because Allah has revealed the Book with the truth; and surely those who differ in .((matter of) the Book are in a great opposition (۱۷۶

Commentary

Qur’an: O you who believe! eat of the good things that We have provided you with: The preceding verses were addressed to the “men” in general; now a selected group .among them (i.e., the believers) is especially spoken to

Thus, this talk issues forth from the preceding one. It seems as though Allah is turning away from an intractable and self-opinioned group that was impervious to reason, and looks towards those who would listen to, and accept the call of, the Speaker, .because they believe in Him

The difference in the two speeches springs from the change of the audience. The believers were expected to accept what was said to them. Therefore, they were told to “eat from the good things that We have provided you with”. The expression is more loving than the previous impersonal phrase addressed to the general public: “eat the .”lawful (and) good things out of what is in the earth

The loving expression of the verse under discussion paves the way for the direction that they should be thankful to Allah alone, because they are monotheists, they do not worship anyone other than Allah. It was for this very reason that Allah said, “that We have provided you with”, and did not say, 'what you have been provided with', or .”“what is in the earth

The Qur'anic expression (in active voice) shows that Allah is

.known to them and near them, is affectionate and compassionate to them

The Arabic phrase translated as “the good things that We have provided you with”, would be literally translated as 'the good things of what We have provided you with' - in genitive case. Apparently the adjective (the good things) is the first construct, related to the second construct (what We have provided you with); and means in .'effect, 'eat from Our sustenance that is all good

This meaning is appropriate in this context which is meant to show Allah's kindness and compassion for the believers. The phrase is not meant to restrict the second construct with the first one. In other words, it does not mean, 'eat from the good provisions, not from the bad ones': because such meaning would be quite irrelevant in this setting in which Allah wishes to remove prohibition, telling them not to abstain from any provision given by Allah - as, such behaviour would be a self-imposed .unauthorized legislation, would be a talk without knowledge

Qur’an: and give thanks to Allah if Him it is that you worship: Apparently it should have been 'give thanks to Us', but the Qur'an says, “give thanks to Allah”. This expression is .more appropriate for the theme of monotheism which the verse leads to

And for the same reason the next phrase, “if Him it is that you worship”, was preferred to a shorter, 'if you worship Him'. The present expression restricts and confines the .worship to Allah alone

Qur’an: He has

only forbidden you what dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine, and that over which any other (name) than (that of) Allah has been invoked: Invoking any name other than Allah's, means slaughtering for any thing other than Allah, for example, .sacrificing for idols

Qur'an: But whoever is forced (to it), not revolting, nor exceeding the limit: That is, when he is not unjust, nor does he exceed the limit; is driven to it because of :emergency. The meaning is therefore as follows

Whoever is forced to eat some of these forbidden things, because of some emergency, while he does not like at all to go against the law of Allah, nor does he .exceed the limit, there shall be no blame on him

But if he was trapped into that emergency because of his own revolting behaviour or because he had exceeded the limit and was then driven to that necessity, then he is .not allowed to eat from these things

The sentence, "surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful," shows that the above permission is just a concession given by Allah to the believers; otherwise, the basis of prohibition is .present even in this case

Qur'an: Surely those who conceal what Allah has revealed of the Book: It is an allusion to the People of the Book. There were many good and lawful things - in the rites of worship and other matters - which their elders and leaders had arbitrarily forbidden them - while they had got the Book and that Book

.contained no sanction against those good things

These people did not conceal what they did but only because they wanted to protect their high position and prestige in the community, and because they did not like to stem the flow of gifts, riches and properties which their power supposedly entitled .them to

This verse unambiguously proves that a man's deeds are embodied and assume the form of a body; and it is the deeds that finally emerge as their own results. In this verse, Allah first says that their action of taking a small price for the Divine Revelation .is one and the same with their eating the fire into their bellies

Then the description of their concealing and price taking is changed to that of buying error for the guidance; then this gives way to bartering chastisement for forgiveness. Then it ends on the words, "Oh! how (bold) they are to endure fire". Thus, their misdeed itself is transformed into the fire, although what they had done was to .conceal the revelation and to continue on that behaviour

Traditions

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allah, but whoever is forced (to it), not revolting) is one who desires = (اَلبَـــاغِىْ revolting, nor exceeding the limit: 'al-Baghi .exceeding the limit) is thief = اَلعَادِىْ) hunting(١), and al- 'adi

They are not allowed to eat dead (animal) even if they are faced with emergency. It is forbidden to them. This (concession) does not cover them as it does (other) Muslims. And they are not

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Another meaning of al-baghi is "desirous"; the explana-tion in the tradition is based -١ (.on this meaning. (tr

(allowed to shorten the prayer (in such journeys)." (al-Kafi

(Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "al-Baghi is unjust and al-'adi is usurper." (al-'Ayyashi

Hammad narrates from the same Imam that he said: "al-Baghi is one who revolts ".against the Imam, and al-'adi is thief

Abu Ja'far and Abu 'Abdillah (a.s.) have said: "Not revolting against the Imam of the Muslims, nor transgressing the path of the righteous ones with disobedience." ((Majma'ul-bayan

The author says: All these are various applications of these words; and they support .the meaning we have given earlier

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allah, Oh! how (bold) they are to endure fire:" (It means,) how bold they are to commit the deeds which, they know, will take (them to the fire." (al-Kafi

Ali ibn Ibrahim narrates from as-Sadiq (a.s.) about this sentence: "How daring they' (are to (risk) the fire." (Majma'u١-bayan

".as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "How active they are in the deeds of the people of the fire

The author says: These traditions are in fact similar in their meanings: The first tradition explains boldness for fire with boldness in perpetrating the causes of the fire; the second one gives its meaning as daring to enter the fire; the third one interprets it as boldness to commit sins that would lead to the fire - and it is almost the .same with the meaning of the first tradition

Suratul Baqarah: Verse ١٧٧

point

(١٧٧) لَّيسَ البِرَّ أَن تُوَلُّواْ وُجُوهَكُمۡ قِبَلَ المَشرِقِ وَالمَغرِبِ وَلَٰكِنَّ البِرَّ مَنۡ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَاليَوۡمِ الأَخِرِ وَالمَلَٰئكَةِ وَالكِتَٰبِ وَالنَّبِيِّنَ وَءَاتَى المَالَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ

ذَوِى ٱلْقُرْبَىٰ وَٱلْيَتَـٰمَىٰ وَٱلْمَسَـٰكِينَ وَٱبْنَ ٱلسَّبِيلِ وَٱلسَّآئِلِينَ وَفِى ٱلرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتَى ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَٱلْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَـٰهَدُواْ ۖ وَٱلصَّـٰبِرِينَ فِى ٱلْبَأْسَآءِ وَٱلضَّرَّآءِ وَحِينَ ٱلْبَأْسِ ۗ أُوْلَـٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ صَدَقُواْ ۖ وَأُوْلَـٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْمُتَّقُونَ

It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteousness is the one who believes in Allah and the last day and the angels and the Book and the prophets, and gives away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars and for (the emancipation of) the captives, and keeps up prayer and pays the zakat, and the performers of their promise when they make a promise, and the patient in distress and affliction and in time of conflict - these are they who are true and these are they who are the pious (١٧٧).

Commentary

It is said that when the qiblah was changed from Baytu 'l-Maqdis to the Ka'bah, there ensued a long drawn out controversy and conflict in the public. It was then that this verse was revealed.

Qur'an: It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West: al-Birr (اَلْــبِـرُّ = righteousness); al-barr (اَلْــبَـرُّ = righteous), it is a perpetual adjective. Qibal (قِبَــل = towards, in the direction of), al-qiblah (اَلقِبْـــلَـةُ = a certain direction) is derived from it.

Dhul-qurba (ذو القُرْبى = relative); al-yatama (اَليَتَامى) is plural of al- yatim (اَليَتِيْمُ)

(اَلمِسْكِيْنُ is plural of al-miskin (اَلمَساكِيْنُ) orphan; he who has lost his father); al-masakin =
.(poor = (اَلفـــَقِيْرُ miserably poor, one who suffers a worse condition than al-faqir =

is plural of ar- (اَلرِّقـــَابُ) one stranded in journey); ar-riqab = (اِبْنُ السَّبِيْـــلِ Ibnu 's-sabil
) is a masdar like al-bu's (اَلبأســآءُ) 'neck; it refers to slave). al-Ba'sa = (اَلرَّقـــَبَه ُ raqabah
.both having the same meaning: hardship, poverty ,(اَلبُؤْسُ

and both mean affliction with (اَلضّـــرُّ) too is a masdar like ad-darr (اَلضّـــرّآءُ) 'ad-Darra
injury or loss, for example, when a man is afflicted with a disease, injury, or loss of
.(intensity of war = (اَلبأسُ property or child. al-Ba's

Qur’an: but righteousness is the one who believes in Allah: Instead of defining righteousness, the verse turns to describing the righteous ones; thus it introduces the people in the light of their attributes. In this way, it points to the fact that abstract ideals and abstruse ideas have no value in Islam unless they appear in concrete .shape in the character of a man

It is a well-known style of the Qur'an that it explains and defines a condition and a rank by introducing the people having that rank and condition; it is never satisfied .with mere theoretical explanations of good and bad, virtue and vice

The words, “the one who believes in Allah and the last day…,” define the righteous ones, and explain their real state. The verse introduces them with

all three aspects of belief, deeds and morals, in three stages. the first stage begins with the words, "the one who believes in Allah;" the second is the sentence, "these are ".they who are true;" and the third is, "and these are they who are the pious

Allah begins the first stage, saying: "the one who believes in Allah and the last day and the angels and the Book and the prophets". It is a comprehensive description of all the true gnosis which Allah wants His servants to believe in. The belief referred to in this .verse is the perfect belief which can never fail to produce its effect

When a believer attains to this stage of faith, his heart is never assailed by any doubt or confusion; he does not take a dim view of whatever befalls him, nor is he offended .if afflicted with a misfortune

Likewise, his morals and actions are safe from adverse influences. This interpretation is further supported by the phrase, "these are they who are true". Truth, in this verse, is general and unconditional; it is not restricted to any condition of man's heart or any :activity of his limbs. It means, they are real believers, true in their belief; as Allah says

But no! by your Lord! they do not believe until they make you a judge of that which has become a matter of disagreement among them, and then do not find any straitness in their hearts as to what you have decided and submit with

.(total submission (۴:۶۵

:Thus, their condition fits the fourth stage of the belief, described under the verse

When his Lord said to him, Submit (yourself), he said: "I submit myself to the Lord of .(the worlds" (۲:۱۳۱

After description of belief, Allah mentions some of their deeds: "and gives away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars and for (the emancipation of) the captives, and keeps up ."prayer and pays the zakat

:Here their prayer is mentioned, and it concerns the Divine Worship. Allah says

;(surely prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil... (۲۹:۴۵ ...

:also, He says

.(and keep up prayer for My remembrance (۲۰:۱۴ ...

It is followed by mention of zakat; and it is a financial obligation promulgated for economic good of the society. And before it all, the verse refers to their giving away wealth to various groups; this habit of theirs spreads the good and enlarges the circle of non-obligatory munificence, in order that the need of the poor may be fulfilled and .their condition improved

Lastly, the verse cites some of their excellent moral characteristics: "and the performers of their promise when they make a promise, and the patient in distress to promise; to commit oneself to = (العَهْدُ and affliction and in time of conflict". al-'Ahd .something). The verse mentions "their promise" unconditionally

Yet, it does not cover the belief and the resulting obligation of following the laws of the shari'ah (as some people have

said). Why? Because on going further we find the proviso, “when they make a promise”; and clearly acceptance of true faith and sub-mission to its concomitants is .an unconditional obligation; and is obligatory on all the people at all the times

It does not depend on one's commitment. However, the “promise”, by its generality, covers every commitment made by man. For example, when he says: I'll surely do it; or, I'll never do it. It includes every deal made in business transactions, every word .spoken in social and family circles

Patience is steadfastness in face of hardship, be it a series of benumbing misfortunes .or a fight against formidable adversaries

These two excellent virtues - fulfilment of promise and patience - do not cover all the necessary virtues; but when they are found somewhere, the other virtues invariably always follow suit. One of these two virtues (patience in hardships) has a passive .quality, while the other (fulfilling the promise) has an active role

By mentioning them, Allah in effect says that when they say something they surely .proceed to do it, and do not withdraw from it even if they have to face difficulties

The second stage of introduction is contained in the phrase, “these are they who are true”. Truth is a comprehensive virtue, encompassing all attributes of knowledge and action. Truth is an inseparable concomitant of all basic virtues - continence, bravery, wisdom and justice - and of their branches., Man's life is made up of his belief, words .and actions

When he is

true, all the three aspects conform with each other. He does not do except what he .says, and does not say except. that which he believes

Man by instinct accepts the right and truth; and even if he pretends otherwise, he submits to it in his heart. When he believes in the right truthfully, his word conforms with his belief, and his action with his word. It is then that he reaches the perfection in all three aspects of belief, morality and deeds. His faith becomes pure, his character .virtuous and his deeds good

:Allah says

.(O You who believe! fear Allah and be with the true ones (۹:۱۱۹

The restrictive style, "these are they who are true", puts emphasis on the description of the righteous. It means - and Allah knows better - that if you want to find the true .ones, then these are the righteous

The third and final stage of their introduction is the phrase, "and these are they who are the pious": This restrictive style looks at the level of perfection. Piety cannot be complete and perfect, unless righteousness and truth have attained their completion .and perfection

The attributes ascribed here to the righteous are the same which Allah has described :in other places. Allah says

Surely the righteous shall drink of a cup the admixture of which is camphor. A fountain from which the servants of Allah shall drink; they shall make it to flow a (goodly) flowing forth. They fulfil vows and fear a day the evil of which shall

be spreading far and wide. And they give food out of love for Him to the poor and the orphan and the captive. We only feed you for Allah's sake; we desire from you neither reward nor thanks; surely we fear from our Lord a stern, distressful day. Therefore Allah will guard them from the evil of that day and cause them to meet with radiance and happiness; and reward them, because they were patient, with garden and silk .((۷۶:۵-۱۲

These verses, about some righteous personalities, describe their attributes of belief in Allah and the last day, their spending for the sake of Allah, their fulfilling the vows and :their patience. Again, Allah says

Nay! Most surely the record of the righteous shall be in the 'Illiyyin. And what will make you know what the 'Illiyyin is? It is a written book; see it those who are near (to Allah). Most surely the righteous shall be in bliss, on thrones, they shall gaze. You will recog- nize in their faces the radiance of bliss. They are made to quaff of a pure drink that is sealed. The sealing of it is (with) musk; and for that let the aspirers aspire. And the admixture of it is a water of Tasnim, a fountain from which drink they who are drawn .(nearer (to Allah) (۸۳:۱۸ -۲۸

If you meditate on these verses in conjunction with those quoted above, you will see the reality of their attributes and their final destination. These verses praise the righteous that

they are servants of Allah, and are drawn near to Him.

Now, Allah describes His servants in these words:

Surely as regards My servants, thou hast no authority over them (۱۵:۴۲);

and He says about those drawn near to Him:

And the foremost are the fore-most; these are they who are drawn near (to Allah), in the gardens of bliss (۵۶:۱۰-۱۲).

It is now clear that the righteous are the foremost in this world in reaching nearer to Allah, as they are foremost in the next world in attaining to the bounties of the garden.

If you continue looking at the condition of the righteous in the light of these verses you will unearth many hidden nuggets of spiritual reality.

The above discourse shows that the righteous are in the highest, that is, the fourth, stage of belief, as we have explained earlier. Allah says:

Those who believe and do not mix their faith with iniquity, those are they who have the security and they are those who go aright (۶:۸۲).

Qur'an: and the patient in distress: The word "patient" in the Arabic text is in accusative case while the other attributes are in indicative. This change has been effected to point out its excellence, to show its importance.

Also, it has been said that when a speech becomes a bit lengthy, several adjectives following each other, then the Arabs break the monotony by interposing negatives between the positives, or by exchanging accusative and indicative cases.

Traditions

The Prophet said: "Whosoever acted in accordance with this verse, he surely perfected (his) faith."

The

author says: Its reason is clear from the explanation written above. az-Zajjaj and al-Farra' are reported to have said: “This verse is reserved for the sinless prophets, ”.because nobody, except the prophets, can perform these things as they should be

But this comment shows that they had not pondered on it properly. They seem confused regarding spiritual ranks. The verses of the Chapter of the Man (۷۶:۵-۱۲) quoted above, were revealed about the family members of the Messenger of Allah (S); Allah in those verses has named them “the righteous”, although they were not .prophets

Of course, the rank of the righteous is very high, and their position is of very great importance. Allah praises the men of understanding saying that they: remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens :and the earth

Then He quotes their prayer, which shows that their highest aspiration was that their :Lord should join them to the righteous

.(and make us die with the righteous (۳:۱۹۰-۳

Al-Hakim at-Tirmidhi narrates from Abu 'Amir ash-Sha'bi that he said: “I said: 'O Messenger of Allah! What is the completion of righteousness?' He said: 'That you (should do in private what you do in public.' ” (ad-Durru 'l-manthur

Abu Ja'far and Abu 'Abdillah (a.s.) said: “The near of kin are the relatives of the (Prophet.” (Majma 'u 'l-bayan

The author says: It is an application of this verse, keeping in view the verses of near .(relatives (۴۲:۲۳

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: “al-Faqir (poor) is he

who does not ask from the people; and al-miskin is of more straitened circumstances (is the most wretched of all." (al-kafi (اَلبَآئِسُ) than the "poor"; and al-ba's

Abu Ja'far (a.s.) said: "The wayfarer is the one stranded in the way." (Majma 'u 'l-(bayan

who, after making(١) (المُکـَاتِب ُ) Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) was asked about an al-mukatib a partial payment was unable to pay (the balance of the stipulated money of) his al-:He (a.s.) said .(المُکـَاتـَبَه ُ) mukatabah

charity money; = (الصَدَق ـَه ُ It will be paid on his behalf from the money of as-sadaqah" also zakat), because Allah, the Mighty, the Great, says: and for (the emancipation of) (the captives." (at-Tahdhib

The same Imam said about the words of Allah, and the patient in distress and affliction: "In hunger, and thirst and fear." And he (a.s.) said about the word, and in (time of conflict: "In the fighting." (at-Tafsir, al-Qummi

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ١٧٨ – ١٧٩

point

(١٧٨) يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ كُتِبَ عَلَيۡكُمُ ٱلۡقِصَاصُ فِي ٱلۡقَتۡلَى ۖ ٱلۡحُرُّ بِٱلۡحُرِّ وَٱلۡعَبۡدُ بِٱلۡعَبۡدِ وَٱلۡأُنثَىٰ بِٱلۡأُنثَىٰ ۚ فَمَنۡ عُفِيَ لَهُۥ مِنۡ أَخِيهِ شَيۡءٞ فَٱتِّبَاعُۢ بِٱلۡمَعۡرُوفِ وَأَدَآءٌ إِلَيۡهِ بِإِحۡسَٰنٖ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ تَخۡفِيفٞ مِّن رَّبِّكُمۡ وَرَحۡمَةٞ ۗ فَمَنِ ٱعۡتَدَىٰ بَعۡدَ ذَٰلِكَ فَلَهُۥ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٞ

(١٧٩) وَلَكُمۡ فِي ٱلۡقِصَاصِ حَيَوٰةٞ يَـٰٓأُوْلِي ٱلۡأَلۡبَٰبِ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تَتَّقُونَ

O you who believe! retaliation is prescribed for you in the matter of the slain; the free for the free, and the slave for the slave, and the female for the female; but if any remission is made to any one by his (aggrieved) brother, then

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١ - In Islam a slave was allowed to enter into an agreement with his master. This agreement, called al-mukatabah, entitled him to gain his freedom on payment of

(.stipulated amount. Such a slave was called al-mukatib. (tr

the demand for the bloodwit) should be made according to usage, and payment) should be made to him in a good manner; this is an alleviation from your Lord and a mercy; so whoever exceeds the limit after this, he shall have a painful chastisement .((١٧٨

And there is life for you in the retaliation, O men of understanding, that you may guard .(your-selves (against evil) (١٧٩

Commentary

Qur'an: O you who believe! retaliation is prescribed for you in the matter of the slain; the free for the free...: The verse is ad-dressed to the believers. It means that the law promulgated herein applies to the Muslims only. As regards the non-Muslims - .whether under protection of an Islamic State or not - the verse is silent about them

Some people think that this verse has abrogated the verse ۵:۴۵ (life is for life); because it does not allow killing of a free person for a slave, or of a man for a woman. But actually there is no room for this supposition. The position of this verse vis-à-vis .the verse ۵:۴۵ is like that of an explanation vis-à-vis its text

he = (قـآصّ يُـــقـاَصُّ retaliation) is the masdar of qassa yuqassu = (القِصَـــاص ، Al-Qisas he followed = (قـَصّ أثـــرَهُ followed, he follows); an Arab says: qassa atharahu .(someone's tracks

story-teller) - it is as though he follows the = (القـَصّاصُ Another derivative is al-qssas tracks of the past generations. Retaliation is called al-qisas because it follows the footsteps of the

offender, giving him a punishment similar to that which he had inflicted upon his .victim

Qur’an: but if any remission is made to any one by his (aggrieved) brother: Its literal translation is: then whoever is remitted any thing by his brother. “whoever” refers to the murderer; the heir/s of the murdered person may waive his/their right of retali… .ation

Therefore, “any thing” refers to that right; it is used here as a common noun, in order .that the rule may cover all possibilities, whether there was a full remission or partial

Let us say, for example, that there are many heirs and only some of them waive their .right; then there shall be no retaliation; instead the blood-money will be imposed

The heir of the murdered person who has the right of retaliation) has extraordinarily been described here as the “brother” of the murderer; this expression has been used to awaken the feeling of love and kindness in the heart of the aggrieved party, and gives a hint to him that remission and forgiveness is highly preferable in the eyes of .Allah

Qur’an: then (the demand for the bloodwit) should be made according to the usage, and payment should be made to him in a good manner: Its literal translation is: then following according to usage, and payment to him in a good manner. Both phraseare .subjects with their predicates implied

Thus literally it would mean: then it is obligatory on the aggrieved “brother” to follow ;that remission with demand for the blood-money according to usage

and it is obligatory on the murderer to pay it to the aggrieved brother, that is, heir of .the slain, in a good manner without any annoying delay

Qur'an: this is an alleviation from your Lord and a mercy: The permission to commute the retaliation into blood-money is an alleviation from your Lord, and therefore, once effected, it cannot be changed. The heir of the slain person cannot revert to retali… ation after granting remission. If he transgresses the limit and retaliates after .remission, then he shall have a painful chastisement

Qur'an: And there is life for you in the retaliation, O men of understanding, that you guard yourselves (against evil): This verse points to the philosophy of this legislation. It aims at removing a possible misunderstanding that - because Allah has allowed remission and blood-money, and also because remission expands the circle of mercy .and affection - remission is more in conformity with public weal and social good

The verse shows that, although remission is an alleviation based on mercy, common good and society's peace depend on the retaliation. The only guarantee of life is the law of retaliation, and not remission, blood-money, or any other thing. Man has to accept this fact, if he has understanding. "that you may guard yourselves" that is, .from murder. It gives the basic of the law of retaliation

The scholars have said that the verse, "and there is life for you in the retaliation," is one of the most eloquent in its clarity, and the most refined

in rhetorics, in addition to its having many other fine literary points, like brevity - it has so few words and such a small number of total letters - fluency of style and clarity of composition. It combines the force of argument with beauty of meaning, the fineness .of proof with clarity of result

Before this verse was revealed, the Arabs were fond of some adages and maxims (on the subject of murder and retaliation), of whose rhetorics and fluency they were very :proud. For example

To kill some is to keep alive all', and 'To increase killing is to decrease killing'. And the ' most remarkable in their eyes was the sentence: 'Killing stamps out killing.' But when .this verse was revealed all were forgotten

Some of its distinguishing points are as follows: The verse has fewer letters, and is easy to pronounce. "the retaliation" with definite article is a proper noun, while "life" is common noun - it shows that the resulting good is greater and more widespread than .the retaliation

It explains the result in clear words and describes the real philosophy of the law, that is, the life. It unambiguously shows by what means the desired result can be obtained: .Obviously, it is the retaliation that leads to life, and not the killing

After all, many killings are done unjustly, and they do not lead to life, they are) negation of life.) The word, "retaliation," covers also other punishments besides killing, - .that is, the reprisal in the matter of injury, etc

.and such retributions too lead to the society's life

The word conveys another extra meaning, as it shows that the retribution has resulted from unjust killing. (Compare it with their maxim, “Killing stamps out killing”, (.which does not give any idea that “killing” refers to any punishment

Then there is an exhortation in this sentence, as it points to a life reserved for the people, which they are oblivious of; it behoove them to take hold of it as it really :belongs to them; it is as if someone tells you

There is a property belonging to you with so-and-so, or in such and such a place. Lastly, the opening word of the verse, that is, “for you” makes it clear to the men of understanding that the law-giver only desires to protect their interest, and no benefit .is ever to accrue to him

These are a few of the fine points found in this verse. The scholars have mentioned some more points, which may be seen in the books of rhetorics. The fact is, the more deeply you look at this verse, the more dazzled you shall be by its brilliance and .radiance; and the word of Allah is the highest

Traditions

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) said about the word of Allah, the free for the free: “A free man shall not be killed for the slave; but he shall be beaten a severe beating and be fined the blood-money of the slave. And if a man kills a woman, and the heirs of the slain

woman) want to kill him, they shall pay half of his blood-money to the man's heirs.") ((al-'Ayyashi

al-Halabi narrates from as-Sadiq (a.s.). He says: "I asked him about the word of Allah, :the Mighty, the Great

;(but he who for-goes it, it shall be an expiation for him (۵:۴۵

he (the Imam) said: 'His sins shall be expiated, as much as he forgives.' And I asked :him about the word of Allah, the Mighty, the Great

but if any remission is made to anyone by his (aggrieved) brother, then (the demand for the bloodwit) should be made according to usage, and payment should be made to .him in a good manner

He said: 'He who has got the right (i.e. the aggrieved party) should not put his brother (i.e. the murderer) in difficulty, when he has made settlement with him concerning the blood-money; and he who has got the duty (of paying the blood-money) should not delay in its payment when he has ability to do so; and he should pay it to him in a good '.manner

:And I asked him about the word of Allah, the Mighty, the Great

.so whoever exceeds the limit, he shall have a painful chastisement

He said: 'It refers to a man who accepts blood-money or forgives, or makes compro- mise, then exceeds the limit (and kills the murderer); so he shall be killed as Allah, the (Mighty, the Great, has said.' " (al-Kafi

.The author says: There are many traditions of the same meanings

An Academic Essay on Retaliation

Before the advent of Islam, and until this

verse was revealed, the Arabs believed in requiting a murder with killing. But the retaliation had no defined limit. It all depended on the strength or weakness of the .aggrieved party

Sometimes they killed a man for a man, and a woman for a woman - thus keeping a balance between the crime and its punishment. At other times they killed ten persons for one, a free man for a slave, a chief for and ordinary man. Many times a tribe .destroyed another just in retaliation of one man

The Jews believed in retribution, as we see in chapters ۲۱ and ۲۲ of Genesis, and :chapter ۳۵ of Numbers. The Qur'an quotes it in these words

And We prescribed to them in it that life is for life, and eye for eye, and nose for nose, .(and ear for ear and tooth for tooth, and (that there is) reprisal in wounds (۵:۴۵

The Christians reportedly recognize only remission and payment of blood-money in .the matter of murder

All societies and nations, with all their differences, believed in, and practised, retaliation by killing, in one way or the other; although they did not have any fixed .code for it even upto the recent centuries

Islam opted for a middle course between confirmation of retaliation and its negation. It prescribed retaliation but did not make it obligatory - it allowed remission and payment of blood-money. Then it laid the foundation of justice by prescribing equality between the murderer and the murdered, telling us that: the free for the

.free, and the slave for the slave, and the female for the female

Objections have been laid against the law of retaliation in general, and the capital punishment, that is, retaliation by killing, in particular. The brunt of the argument is that nowadays the advanced nations do not recognize - or do not enforce - the law of capital punishment. Their objections may be summarized as follows:

Human nature disapproves the idea of a life for a life, when a man looks at this matter .from the point of view of mercy and service to humanity

The killing (i.e. the crime) had caused loss of one person; now the second killing (i.e. its .punishment) would be a further loss, a loss upon loss

Capital punishment is based on hard-heartedness and desire of revenge. These are not good traits; they should be eradicated from society through general training. Even a murderer should be punished through corrective measures; and it can easily be .done through prison and hard labour, not capital punishment

A criminal becomes criminal only because of psychology-cal sickness. He should be .put into mental hospital for treatment

Civil laws and penal codes follow the trends of society. As the society changes, so do the laws and codes. There is no reason why the law of capital punishment should .continue to plague the civilization - even the advanced nations - for ever and ever

Society should make use of its manpower to the maximum possible extent. A criminal may be given a punishment, which would be as

effective as killing - without putting him to death. He may be imprisoned for life, or for a long period. It would satisfy both demands - that of the society and that of the heirs .of the slain

These are the main objections against the law of retaliation with killing. The Qur'an :has replied to all this criticism with one sentence

whoever slays a soul, unless it be for man-slaughter or for mischief in the land, it is … ,(as though he slew all men (۵:۳۲

:as the following explanation shows

The laws, observed by members of a society, are laid down by men and based on a subjective approach - with a view to serve the interest of the society. But the general and basic cause (which brings them into being) is the human nature which has real .existence, and which demands that its deficiencies be made up and its needs fulfilled

This nature, this real being, has nothing to do with the number of the men, nor is it related to the composite unit, that is, the society. Because society is a handiwork of .human nature, while we are talking about the man himself, about his nature itself

This nature, this real being, makes no distinction between a single man and a thousand; all are human beings; and as far as the existence is concerned, one man .and the whole humanity have got equal weight, equal value

This really existing nature has equipped itself with powers and instruments to ward off harmful and destructive influences

from itself, because it loves existence, and repels all things which could deprive it of life. It defends its existence, by all possible means.

It does not stop at any thing, and is ready and willing to kill and destroy the attacker who endangers its existence. Nature tells man to kill whosoever wants to kill him (if he cannot be repelled by any other means). And no one denies justifiability of such killing.

Look at these advanced and “civilized” nations. They have no hesitation in waging war in defense of their freedom, independence and national interest. What will they do if someone wanted to kill all their nationals?

They think that supremacy of law is sacrosanct. They defend the rule of law, they try to preserve order in the society, by all possible means - even if it entailed killing some offenders. They protect their national interest - even by war, if nothing else works.

They justify war for this reason in high-sounding phrases - the war which shakes the world to pieces and destroys the tilth and the generations. There is a never-ending race for armaments:

A country sacrifices its progress to arm itself with some sophisticated military hardware; and then its adversaries try to acquire even more advanced arms. Ask them, “Why this mad race?” They will say, it is essential for their defense, for the safety of their society and civilization.

Now, society and civilization is only a handiwork of the nature. How is it that the nature allows massacres, mass destructions and

wholesale killings just to save a handiwork of its, and does not allow it for its own protection and safety? How is it that it allows to kill someone who intends to kill but ?has not killed yet, but forbids killing the man who intended to kill and killed

The nature has decreed that every action should have a reaction; so he who has done an atom's weight of good shall see it; and he who has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it. Now what type of nature is this which breaks its own law, violates its own decree, when it comes to giving death penalty to someone who has killed an innocent ?person

Moreover, Islam does not accord any value, any weight to man, unless he is on the religion of monotheism. One man believing in the one and the only God is equal in the .eyes of Islam to the whole human race

Therefore, whoever slays a believer, it is as though he slew all men - because he committed a sacrilege against the dignity of that believer. Likewise, whoever slays .any person, it is as though he slew all men - looking at the reality of his existence

But so far as the civilized nations are concerned, religion has no value in their eyes. If they had accorded as much value (if not more) to religion as they give to civilization, .they would have defended the religion to the same extent at least

Furthermore, Islam has brought the shari'ah

which is meant for the whole world - not for a particular country or a selected group only. Let us say that what the advanced nations have legislated is good for their .society

But they have opted for this course after they have made sure that the general training of their people has been effective; that their governments are faithfully discharging their duties; that according to crime statistics, these well-trained nations are now totally averse to murder and violence; that as a result of this aversion, no one .indulges in crimes of violence - except in extremely rare cases

And because it hap-pens so rarely, these nations have decided to punish murder in some ways other than death. Islam does not say that such training should not be .given, or that if given it would not be effective

When that stage is reached, capital punishment may give way to remission - with the law of retaliation keeping its basic position unaltered. The relevant sentence in this :verse points to this fact

but if any remission is made to any one by his (aggrieved) brother, then (the demand for the bloodwit) should be made according to usage, and payment should be made to .him in a good manner

Clearly, the language used is that of moral training; and when a nation advances to a level where all take pride in forgiveness and remission, then they would not deviate .from the path of remission to that of revenge

But what about other nations? We know their moral status

is not so high. We see the condition of these societies, and the extent of the moral decay of their people. In these places, the criminals are not afraid of prison or hard labour; they are immune to sermons and exhortations; they do not understand such .abstract ideas as human rights, nor do they give any importance to them

And the facilities which they are provided with in prisons are far much better and .much more comfortable than the wretched life they are accustomed to at home

The result? They do not care about social disgrace or penal sentence; they are afraid of neither prison nor hard labour; beatings and floggings are just occupational hazards to them. That is why crime rates are going higher and higher in almost every .country

Suppose there is there an ideal society we have mentioned earlier; still the overwhelming majority of nations come into this second less ideal category. Therefore, the general and basic law could only be the retaliation with possibility of .remission

After that, if the ethical standard of a nation improved and if it advanced gracefully on the path of moral perfection (and Islam spares no effort for moral upliftment of its people), it would automatically opt for remission. If on the other hand, it continued its downward slide, and remained ungrateful to Allah's favours, then the law of .retaliation would prevail - with possibility of remission even then

:Now, let us have a look at their objections

The talk about mercy and kindness to human beings

is all very good. But not every kindness is good, nor is every mercy a virtue. Showing mercy to a hardened criminal who has no regard for others' life and honour, is a loathsome offence against good law-abiding people. Indiscriminate application of .mercy would disrupt the social system, destroy the humanity and nullify the virtues

The same applies to their criticism concerning hard-heartedness and revenge. Avenging an oppressed from the oppressor - in pursuit of justice and truth - is not objectionable in any way; nor is the love of justice a thing to disparage. Moreover, death penalty has not been legislated for revenge only; it serves also to train general .public in good character and to shut the door of mischief in the society

The assertion that the crime of murder is a psychological disease which should be treated in mental hospitals, has provided an excuse - and what a good excuse it is! - to the criminals. It has contributed a lot in the growth of murder, indecency and other .crimes of violence in the society

Why should a criminal refrain from making murder his hobby, when he knows that his urge of violence is but a psychological disease, and that it is an acceptable plea which would oblige the government to treat him with kindness and benevolence, arranging ?for his medication in hospitals

Now, we come to the view that society should utilize all available manpower, and as such should use the criminals in compulsory labour and other such work, by

imprisoning them and cutting their access to the society. If these people really believe in what they say, if there is any truth in this sermon, then why do they forget it in ?those cases in which their legal system provides for capital punishment

We should not forget that there is in every civilized country provision for capital pun… ishment for specified crimes. They give death penalty in those cases because they think those crimes to be extremely heinous and atrocious. But we have already explained that, in the eyes of nature, life of one man is as precious as that of the .whole human race put together

Suratul Baqarah: Verses ۱۸۰ – ۱۸۲

point

(۱۸۰) كُتِبَ عَلَيكُمۡ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ ٱلمَوۡتُ إِن تَرَكَ خَيرًا ٱلوَصِيَّةُ لِلوَٰلِدَينِ وَٱلأَقرَبِينَ بِٱلمَعرُوفِ ۖ حَقًّا عَلَى ٱلمُتَّقِينَ

(۱۸۱) فَمَنۢ بَدَّلَهُ ۥ بَعدَمَا سَمِعَهُ ۥ فَإِنَّمَآ إِثمُهُ ۥ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ يُبَدِّلُونَهُ ۥٓ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

(۱۸۲) فَمَنۡ خَافَ مِن مُّوصٍۢ جَنَفًا أَوۡ إِثمًا فَأَصلَحَ بَينَهُمۡ فَلَآ إِثمَ عَلَيهِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

Bequest is prescribed for you when death approaches one of you, if he leaves behind wealth, for parents and near relatives, according to usage, a duty (incumbent) upon .(those who guard (against evil) (۱۸۰

Whoever then alters it after he has heard it, the sin of it then is only upon those who .(alter it; surely Allah is Hearing, Knowing (۱۸۱

But he who fears an inclination (to a wrong course) or an act of disobedience on the part of the testator, and effects an agreement between the parties, there is no blame on him. Surely

.(Allah is Forgiving,. Merciful (١٨٢

Commentary

Qur’an: Bequest is prescribed for you when death approaches one of you, if he leaves اَلكِتـابَه) behind wealth: The language is that of an obligatory rule, because al-kitabah to write; translated here as “prescribed”) is used in the Qur'an always for definitely = obligatory laws. It is further strengthened by the word “a duty” coming at the end of the verse, because duty too is used, like writing and prescription, for compulsory .orders

But the word ”a duty” is qualified by ”upon those who guard (against evil)”; this somewhat weakens the sense of obligatoriness; it would have been more .'appropriate, in case of obligatoriness, to say, 'a duty upon the believers

In any case, it is said that the verse was later abrogated by the verse of inheritance. If so, then it would only be its “obligatoriness” which was abrogated, not its being liked, recommended. Perhaps, the phrase qualifying “a duty” was used for this very .purpose

is wealth; it probably denotes considerable wealth, not an insignificant (الخَيْرُ) al-Khayr .(known; common usage of good deed and favour = المَعْرُوفُ) amount. al-Ma'ruf

Qur’an: Whoever then alters it after he has heard it, the sin of it then is only upon those who alter it: The pronoun in “the sin of it” refers to the alteration; all the rest refer to the bequest according to usage; bequest is a masdar and is used both as .masculine and feminine

That is why the pronouns used in the verse are)

of masculine gender.) “upon those who alter it”: Allah did not say 'upon them', because the wording used clearly indicates the nature of sin, that is, alteration of a will; also it .paves the way for the next verse

Qur’an: But he who fears an inclination (to a wrong course) or an act of disobedience on the part of the testator, and effects an agreement between the parties, there is no inclination; deviation); it is said that it indicates = (اَلجَـنَـفُ blame on him: al-Janaf shows their inward inclination. (اَلحَنَـفُ) outward inclination of the feet, and al-hanaf In any case, it is used here to denote an inclination towards sin and disobedience, as it .”is followed by “or an act of disobedience

The verse branches out from the preceding one. Its meaning is as follows (and Allah knows better): The sin of alteration is only upon those who alter the bequest (which .(was made according to usage

Of course, if someone fears that the bequest of the testator is, or shall be, an act of disobedience or inclined towards a wrong course, and then effects an agreement between the parties, free from error and sin, then there is no blame on him; because he has not changed a bequest made according to usage; rather he has altered only .the wrong and sin found in it

Traditions

Muhammad ibn Muslim says that he asked as-Sadiq (a.s.) whether a bequest was allowed in favour of an heir. The Imam said: “Yes”. Then he recited

this verse, “Bequest is prescribed… if he leave behind wealth, for parents and near relatives…” (al-'Ayyashi). This tradition is also narrated, with a slight change in .wording, in al-Kafi and at-Tahdhib

as- Sadiq (a.s.) narrates through his father from 'Ali (a.s.) that he said: “He who did not bequesth at the time of his death for those of his near relatives who were not his (heirs, surely ended his deeds with disobedience.” (al-'Ayyashi

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) said about this verse: ”(It is) a right which Allah has given in the properties of men to the Master of this affair (i.e. to the Imam).” The narrator says: “I said: 'Is there a prescribed limit for it?' He said: 'Yes'. I said: 'How much?' He said: 'Its (lower limit is one-sixth; and the higher, one-third.' ” (al-'Ayyashi

The author says: This theme has been narrated also by as-Saduq in his al-Faqih from the same Imam. It is a fine inference from this verse read in conjunction with the :verse

The Prophet has a greater claim on the believers than they have on themselves, and his wives are their mothers; and the possessors of relationship have the better claim in the ordinance of Allah to inheritance, one with respect to another, than (other) believers, and (than) those who have fled (their homes), except that you do some .(good to your awliya'; this is written in the Book (۳۳:۶

This verse abrogated the system prevalent in early days of Islam by which a “muhajir brother” inherited from his “ansar

brother"; and initiated inheritance between the relatives; then it made an exception (from this rule of inheritance by relationship), and that was about doing some good to .(your awliya'(١)

Now Allah has made the Prophet al-waliyy and his pure progeny al-awliya' of the believers. And this exception of doing good to the awliya' brings it within the jurisdiction of the verse under discussion: Bequest... for parents and near relative. And .the Imams are also the "near relatives" (of the Prophet). Understand it

The Fifth or the Sixth Imam said about the verse, Bequest is prescribed for you...: "It is (abrogated. The verses of inheritance abrogated it." (al- 'Ayyashi

The author says: This tradition may be reconciled with the preceding ones if we say that it was only its obligatoriness which was abrogated; thus the order will continue as .liked, recommended) even after that = (المُسْت_َحَبّ ُ) al-mustahabb

Abu Ja'far (a.s.) said about the verse, But he who fears an inclination (to a wrong course) or an act of disobedience...: "al-Janaf is inclination to the side of error without (knowing that it is allowed (or not)." (Majma'ul-bayan

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: "When a man has made his will, then it is not allowed to the executor to alter the bequest made; he should enforce it as (the testator) has bequeathed; except when (the testator) has made his will against the command of Allah, and done injustice (to an heir). Then it is allowed to the executor to bring the will .to the truth (i.e

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١- 'al-Awliya (اَلأَوْلِيَاءُ) is plural of al-waliyy (الوَلِيّ), which has several meanings, important among them being: friend, guardian, relative, a person close to Allah, and master. In the explanation given in the text, it has been taken to mean master and guardian. (tr.)

.(the right course

Let us say, there is a man who has got some heirs; and he bequeaths all (his) property to some of the heirs, depriving the others. In such cases, it is allowed to the executor to bring the will to the right (course). And this is (the meaning of) the word of Allah, an .inclination (to a wrong course) or an act of disobedience

And al-Janaf is inclination to some of his heirs, leaving the others aside; and al-ithm sin; act of disobedience) is that he directs to build fire-temples, and to take = (اَلإِثْمُ intoxicant. Then the executor is allowed not to do any such thing." (at-Tafsir, al-(Qummi

The author says: The explanation of al-janaf given in this tradition, makes clear the meaning of the word of Allah: and effects an agreement between the parties. The words refer to effecting reconciliation and settlement between the heirs, when there is conflict and quarrel among them because the testator was inclined to wrong .course, and favoured one heir at the cost of the others

Muhammad ibn Suqah said: "I asked Abu Ja'far (a.s.) about the word of Allah: Whoever then alters it after he has heard it, the sin of it then is only upon those who alter it. He said: 'It has been abrogated by the next verse; But he who fears an inclination (to a wrong course) or an act of disobedience on the part of the testator, and effects an agreement between the parties, there is no blame

'.on him

He said: 'It means that if the executor fears that the testator is inclined to a wrong course concerning his children in the bequest he has entrusted the executor with, in a way Allah is not pleased with, (and which is) against the truth, then there is no blame on him, (i.e. on the executor of the will) if he changes it to the truth, and to the way of (right that Allah is pleased with.' " (al-Kafi

The author says: This tradition explains one verse with the help of another. Therefore, the word, "abrogated", is not used here in its terminological meaning. And we have earlier mentioned that the word, "abrogation", is sometimes used in the speech of Ahlu 'I-bayt, in a meaning different from the language of the Principles of .Jurisprudence

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In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

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:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ٢٠٠٧, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field

and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes of people interested in reading, with various formats in the .cyberspace

:Our Goals are

(propagating the culture and teachings of Thaqalayn (Quran and Ahlulbayt p.b.u.t-

encouraging the populace particularly the youth in investigating the religious issues-

replacing useful contents with useless ones in the cellphones, tablets and computers-

providing services for seminary and university researchers-

spreading culture study in the publich-

paving the way for the publications and authors to digitize their works-

:Policies

acting according to the legal licenses-

relationship with similar centers-

avoiding parallel working-

merely presenting scientific contents-

mentioning the sources-

.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

:Other activities of the institute

Publication of books, booklets and other editions-

Holding book reading competitions-

Producing virtual, three dimensional exhibitions, panoramas of religious and tourism- places

.Producing animations, computer games and etc-

Launching the website with this address: www.ghaemiyeh.com-

Fabricatingdramatic and speech works-

Launching the system of answering religious, ethical and doctrinal questions-

Designing systems of accounting, media and mobile, automatic and handy systems,- web kiosks

Holding virtual educational courses for the public-

Holding virtual teacher-training courses-

Producing thousands of research software in three languages (Persian, Arabic and- English) which can be performed in computers, tablets and cellphones and available and downloadable with eight international formats: JAVA, ANDROID, EPUB, CHM, PDF, HTML, CHM, GHB on the website

Also producing four markets named "Ghaemiyeh Book Market" with Android, IOS,- WINDOWS PHONE and WINDOWS editions

:Appreciation

We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable .friends who contributed their help and data to us to reach the holy goal we follow

:Address of the central office
Isfahan, Abdorazaq St, Haj Mohammad JafarAbadei Alley, Shahid Mohammad HasanTavakkoly Alley, Number plate ۱۲۹, first floor
Website: www.ghbook.ir
Email: Info@ghbook.ir
Central office Tel: ۰۳۱۳۴۴۹۰۱۲۵
۰۲۱ ـ Tehran Tel: ۸۸۳۱۸۷۲۲
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